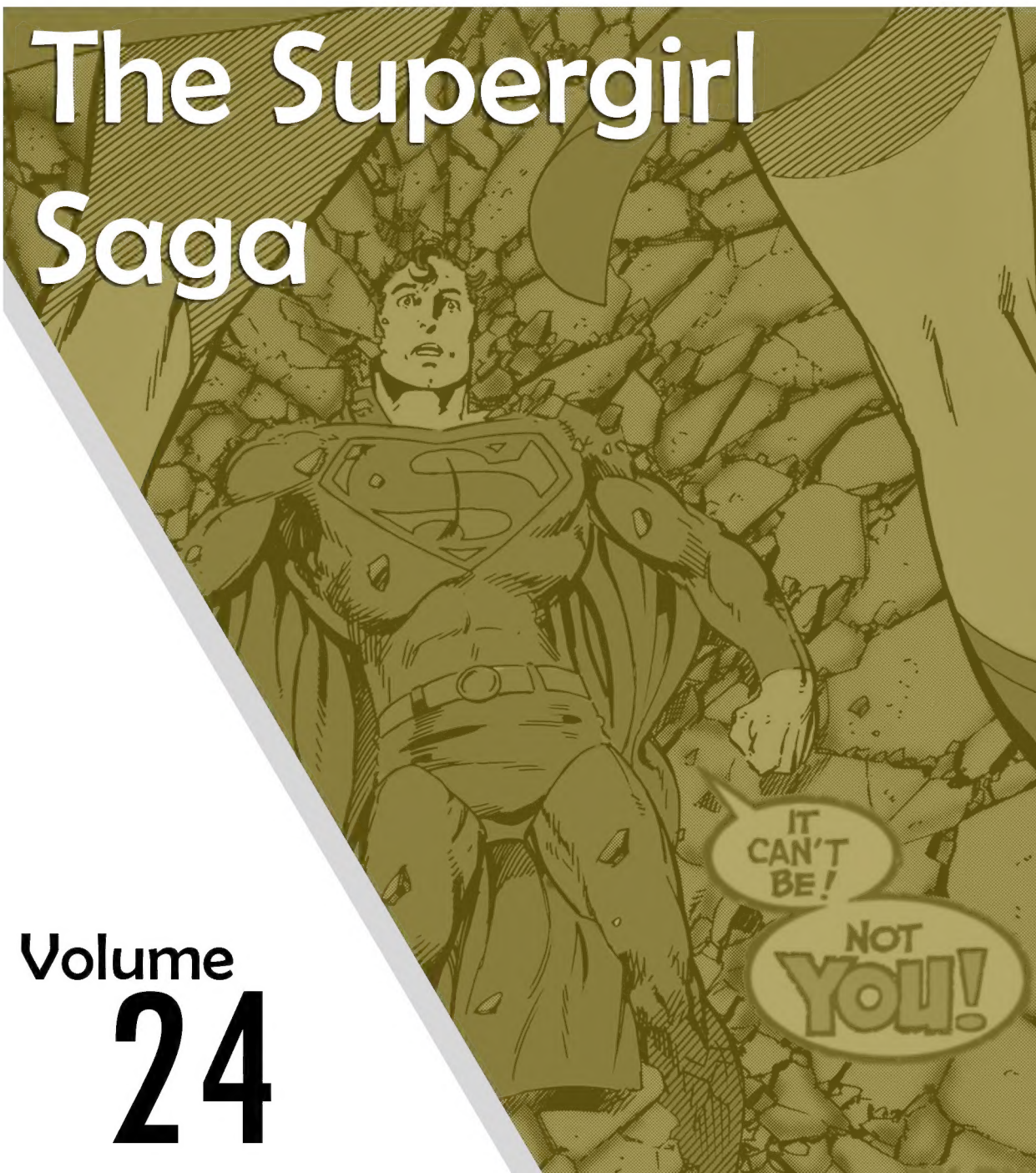
SUPERMAN

Post-CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS

The Supergirl Saga



Volume 24

SUPERMAN
Post-CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS
The Supergirl Saga

THE SOUL OF THE MACHINE

HYDRAULIC PRESSURE'S UP TO SIX TONS, CLIFF. ALL THE TELEMETRY FROM YOUR BODY'S SYSTEMS ARE READING NORMAL, OPERATING AT PEAK EFFICIENCY.

HOW'RE YOU HOLDING UP, MAN?

SO FAR, SO... UHHFFF! ...GOOD, JOSH. IT'S LOOKIN' LIKE ALL O' MY NEW PARTS CHECK OUT. OKAY, JACK UP THE POWER SOME MORE.

INCREASING POWER NOW, CLIFF. IT WILL AUTOMATICALLY INCREASE THE PRESSURE TO A MAXIMUM OF TEN TONS.

G-3695

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CLIFF NEVER CEASES TO *AMAZE* ME. *IMAGINE* NEVER NEEDING TO WORRY ABOUT *PHYSICAL* HARM TO ONESELF... AN INJURY MERELY REQUIRES THE *REPLACING* OF THE DAMAGED BODY PART.

YEAH, NILES CAULDER REALLY KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING WHEN HE BUILT HIM.

AS LONG AS NOTHING GETS AT HIS *BRAIN* INSIDE THE SKULL CASING, HE'S THE NEXT BEST THING TO *INVULNERABLE.*

EIGHT TONS, CLIFF! HOW'S IT FEEL?

I'D *IMAGINE.* LET US KNOW WHEN YOU WANT TO *STOP.*

ARE YOU *KIDDIN'?* I WANNA MAKE 100% SURE EVERYTHING'S *WORKIN'!*

I DO NOT BLAME HIM FOR BEING *CONCERNED* AFTER EXPERIENCING *TWO* MINOR MALFUNCTIONS IN THE MIDST OF *COMBAT.* *

*DP NUMBERS 8 AND 9.--BOB

HEAVY!

NINE TONS AND RISING, CLIFF. YOU *SURE* YOU WANT TO KEEP GOING?

WELL, T'TELL YOU THE *TRUTH,* MAN--

AAAA

RAAK!

SKREE

--I THINK MAYBE I'VE HAD ENOUGH!

YOU'VE HAD IT, PERIOD, WHEN ARANI SEES ANOTHER PIECE OF HER EXPENSIVE TRAINING EQUIPMENT TRASHED.

SO... WHAT'S THE SCORE, KIDDIES?

TOP OF THE CLASS, CLIFF.

YES. YOUR NEWLY REBUILT BODY IS FUNCTIONING PERFECTLY. I DO NOT THINK YOU NEED BE WORRIED ANY LONGER.

I DUNNO, BABE... MY INTERNAL DIAGNOSTICS DIDN'T PICK UP ON THE OTHER MALFUNCTIONS--

--SO HOW'D I KNOW THE SAME GLITCH AIN'T GONNA POP UP AGAIN? I MEAN, AS GOOD AS LEXCORP IS AT MAKIN' MY PARTS, EVEN THEY CAN BLOW IT ONCE INNA WHILE.

THE ODDS OF THREE DEFECTIVE PARTS--

--SLIPPING THROUGH THEIR QUALITY CONTROL ARE ASTRONOMICAL, CLIFF.

MAYBE...'CEPT WE AIN'T SURE WHAT PARTS WENT WRONG THE FIRST TWO TIMES.

YOU HAVE REPLACED EVERY POSSIBLE TROUBLE-SPOT WITH FRESH COMPONENTS. I DOUBT YOU HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER TO WORRY ABOUT.

SURE HOPE SO, VAL, JUST THE SAME...

"... I'M GONNA RUN A **COMPLETE WORK-UP** ON THAT SHIPMENT O' **NEW** PARTS I JUST HAD SENT DOWN FROM STORAGE AT MY **RANCH** IN CALIFORNIA... "

THEY SHOULD BE **HERE!** IT'S **IMPOSSIBLE** THAT THEY WERE **DIS-COVERED** ...!

KRASSH!

WHERE THE HELL **ARE** THEY?

HEY, FELLA--

LEXCORP

WHO ...?

--WHAT D'YOU THINK YOU'RE **DOING** IN HERE? THIS'S **PRIVATE** PROPERTY, SO IF YOU **DON'T** WANNA GET HURT, YOU'LL... YOU'LL...

...**OHMIGOD!** WHA... WHAT **ARE** YOU?

IT'S **GONE,** YOU OLD FOOL... **YOU** KNOW WHERE IT IS, DON'T YOU?

COME ANY CLOSER, AN' I'LL **SHOOT,** SO HELP ME!

NOTHING CAN HELP YOU, OLD MAN!

WHERE IS IT?

KA-BLAM!

I... I **WARNED** YOU...

YOU FOOL! HASN'T BEING IN THE EMPLOY OF ANOTHER ROBOT TAUGHT YOU ANYTHING? YOUR BULLETS ARE USELESS AGAINST THE FORM OF...

...METALLO!

KA-PING!

I COME FOR THE CONTENTS OF BIN NUMBER 19, OLD MAN...BUT SOMEONE HAS TAKEN THEM. MY COMPONENTS...

...AND I WANT THEM BACK! WHERE ARE THEY?

GHAKK!

KRUNCCH!

HURRY, MAN...BEFORE MY SUPERIOR ROBOTIC BODY SNAPS YOUR ALL TOO FRAIL HUMAN NECK!

GO... GO...TO... HELL...

I HAVE INVESTED MUCH TIME AND ENERGY ADAPTING THOSE COMPONENTS FOR MY USE... YOU WILL PRECEDE ME TO HELL IF YOU DON'T REVEAL THEIR LOCATION!

GGGGNNNN NGNHHHH!

KANSAS CITY... MR. STEELE...ORDERED 'EM SHIPPED...DOOM PATROL...HEADQUARTERS...

I DID NOT FORESEE A TRIP TO KANSAS CITY!

DAMN!

THIS GREATLY COMPLICATES MATTERS.

COUGH COUGH

GO, MONSTER... SO MR. STEELE CAN...CAN KICK YOUR BUTT...

THE NEXT DAY, IN KANSAS CITY...

GET THE DOOM PATROL OUT OF KANSAS!

K.C. FOR PEOPLE... NOT FREAKS!

DOOM PATROL OUT

DOOM PATROL SUCKS

...THIS IS ELSA BOND, ON THE SCENE OF THE ***CONTINUING*** DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST KANSAS CITY'S OWN RESIDENT SUPER-HEROES, THE DOOM PATROL. WITH ME IS MR. ROY ELSTON, ***SPOKESMAN*** FOR THE PROTESTERS. WHAT ***EXACTLY*** IS YOUR COMPLAINT AGAINST THE PATROL, MR. ELSTON?

OFF THE FREAKS

EAT AT JOE'S

DOOM PATROL

KANSAS CITY'S WHERE WE'VE GOT OUR HOMES AND OUR ***FAMILIES,*** AND WE ***DON'T*** WANT THESE ***FREAKS*** HERE...

OUR CITY!

NO FREAK

...BRINGING THOSE ***SUPER-VILLAINS*** INTO OUR CITY--

GRASS

--ENDANGERING LIVES AND PROPERTY.

DOOM PATROL ENEMIES OF U.S.

WE WANT 'EM ***OUT*** OF KANSAS CITY! LET 'EM GO TO NEW YORK OR GOTHAM, WHERE THEY'RE ***USED*** TO THOSE THINGS.

CAT

WITH

AVE

ALSO WITH ME IS ***CITY COUNCILMAN REYNOLDS,*** WHO'S JUST INTRODUCED A BILL IN THE COUNCIL THAT WOULD ***BAN*** THE PATROL FROM OPERATING INSIDE THE KANSAS CITY LIMITS.

THAT'S ***CORRECT,*** MS. BOND. IT'S NOTHING ***PERSONAL,*** YOU UNDERSTAND--

PATROL IS DESTROYING OUR CITY!

--BUT IT'S MY ***DUTY*** TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY AGAINST MENACES SUCH AS THE DOOM PATROL. AND THEN THERE'S THE MATTER OF OUR ***MUNICIPAL INSURANCE.***

FAN

60

WAY

THE CITY'S INSURERS HAVE ***ALREADY*** THREATENED TO ***DOUBLE*** OUR PREMIUMS AS A RESULT OF THE DAMAGE DONE DURING THE PATROL'S BATTLE WITH ***SHRAPNEL.*** ANOTHER SUCH CLAIM ***COULD*** LEAD TO THEIR ***CANCELING*** OUR POLICY ***ALTOGETHER.***

WE HAVE A ***CITY*** TO RUN. THERE'S ***NO*** PLACE HERE FOR THE LIKES OF THE DOOM PATROL!

SAVE OUR CITY!

TAKE A HIKE!

DOOM PATROL GO AWAY

DUMB PATROL

SAY NO TO DOOM!

FINISH DOOM PATROL

THANK YOU, COUNCILMAN REYNOLDS. THIS HAS BEEN ELSA BOND REPORTING...

THIS'S GETTING *RIDICULOUS*, CLIFF. WHAT DID WE *DO* TO THESE PEOPLE TO DESERVE THIS KIND OF *ABUSE?*

SOME FOLKS'LL GET ALL BENT OUTTA SHAPE OVER *ANYTHIN'*, MAN.

DOOM PATROL GO AWAY

JOB

ANYWAY, I GOT *BIGGER* THINGS T'WORRY ABOUT THAN A BUNCH O' LOUDMOUTHS WHO DON'T LIKE OUR FACES... LIKE *LARRY*. I'M *WORRIED* ABOUT HIM, JOSH.

HE'S BEEN *MISSIN'*...

...EVER SINCE WE GOT BACK FROM THAT RUN-IN WITH *GARGUAX'S PLASTIC MEN* OUT WEST.

TOP O' *THAT*, MY *FOREMAN* AT THE RANCH, BENJY, GOT HIMSELF HURT *BAD* BY SOME INTRUDER YESTERDAY, ONLY HE'S BEEN *UNCONSCIOUS* ...SO WE DON'T KNOW *WHO*...

IT APPEARS I HAVE MADE MY *RECOVERY* JUST IN *TIME!* A *WEEK* IN HOSPITAL, AND THE ENTIRE TEAM *FALLS APART!*

NOTHING'S FALLING APART, ARANI. MAYBE WE'VE HIT SOME *HARD* TIMES, BUT I...

BUT *NOTHING*, JOSHUA!

THE DOOM PATROL WAS CREATED FOR A *SPECIFIC* PURPOSE, AND THIS *CHAOS* IS THE PRICE WE PAY FOR ALLOWING OURSELVES TO BE *SIDE-TRACKED* BY UNIMPORTANT MATTERS.

YEAH, RIGHT! ALIENS *INVADIN'* THE PLANET AIN'T NO *TANGENT*, BABY. LIKE IT OR NOT, WE'RE UP TO OUR *NECKS* IN IT AND WE GOTTA SEE IT THROUGH.

AND WHAT OF THE *PROTESTERS?* AND TRAINOR'S WHEREABOUTS? ADMIT IT, CLIFF, *NOTHING* GOES RIGHT!

WHAT'D YA *EXPECT?* PEOPLE DOIN' STUFF WE DON'T LIKE'VE GOTTA FILE AN *AGENDA* OR SOMETHIN'?

YOU ARE BEING *DIFFICULT*, CLIFF.

OF COURSE WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER SUCH MATTERS...

...AS THE PROTESTERS AND GARGUAX...

I'VE HEARD THIS ALL *BEFORE*... TOO MANY TIMES!

"...BUT LARRY TRAINOR IS SUPPOSED TO BE YOUR **FRIEND**, AND YOU CANNOT EVEN MANAGE TO KEEP ACCOUNTS OF **HIS** WHEREABOUTS!"

...WELCOME YOU TO **BELLE REVE FEDERAL PRISON.**

WE GET QUITE A **NUMBER** OF DISTINGUISHED VISITORS FROM **YOUR** FIELD--

--BUT IT'S A **PARTICULAR** HONOR TO MEET ONE OF THE **ORIGINAL** DOOM PATROL, MR. TRAINOR. I, ER...

...I REMEMBER THE **SACRIFICE** YOU PEOPLE MADE AGAINST CAPTAIN ZAHL AND MADAME ROUGE AND...

THAT WAS A **LONG** TIME AGO, **DR. DOYLE.**

WHAT I'M INTERESTED IN **NOW** IS REVIEWING ONE OF YOUR **PRISONERS--**

--WHO, I BELIEVE, CARRIES THE **POTENTIAL** OF A **CURE** FOR THE **RADIATION SICKNESS** THAT'S GOT ME STUCK WRAPPED IN THESE BANDAGES.

OF COURSE, MR. TRAINOR.

THE WARDEN'S INSTRUCTED ME TO OFFER YOU **WHATEVER** ASSISTANCE YOU MAY NEED.

I HOPE YOU'LL **THANK** WARDEN ECONOMOS FOR ME, DR. DOYLE.

HE'S **HAPPY** TO BE OF HELP

WE'LL BE ENTERING THE **HIGH SECURITY** AREA NOW. OPEN UP, WOULD YOU, WATSON? THANKS.

AS YOU KNOW, BELLE REVE WAS BUILT **SPECIALLY** TO HOLD PRISONERS WHICH **NORMAL** PRISON FACILITIES **CAN'T**--THAT IS, **SUPER-VILLAINS.**

EACH CELL IS **DESIGNED** TO **COUNTERACT** A PRISONER'S SUPER-POWERS AND KEEP HIM **CONTAINED.** IT'S NOT AN **EASY** TASK, CONSIDERING THE GREAT **DIVERSITY** OF VILLAINS WE GET THROUGH HERE.

AHH! HERE WE ARE. WOULD YOU LIKE TO **VIEW** THE PRISONER, MR. TRAINOR?

PLEASE, DR. DOYLE.

THIS IS ALL SO **SIMPLE!** MY **CREDENTIALS** GIVE ME **ACCESS,** AND THE PATROL'S **REPUTATION** IS ENOUGH TO ENSURE ME FULL, **UNQUESTIONING** COOPERATION.

BUT THEN, HOW COULD **THEY** KNOW WHAT I'M **REALLY** AFTER?

THERE HE **IS,** MR. TRAINOR--

--MARTIN KRULL... A.K.A.-- REACTRON!

I'M SURE YOU KNOW HIS HISTORY-- HOW HIS REPEATED EXPOSURE TO MILITARY A-BOMB TESTS IN THE 1950S WHEN HE WAS A YOUNG SOLDIER ALTERED HIS BODY'S ATOMIC STRUCTURE--

--RESULTING, YEARS LATER, IN THE RELEASING OF THE ACCUMULATED RADIATION, ALTERING HIM STILL FURTHER AND GIVING HIM THE POWER OVER ALL FORMS OF RADIATION.

I'VE BEEN OVER HIS FILE AT PATROL HEAD-QUARTERS--

--AND I'M CONVINCED HE HOLDS THE KEY TO MY OWN PROBLEM. ONCE I RUN SOME TESTS ON HIM, I'LL KNOW FOR SURE.

WELL, WE HAVE NO OBJECTIONS.

STILL, EVEN THOUGH HE'S A PRISONER, YOU'RE GOING TO NEED KRULL'S PERMISSION FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

LET ME TALK TO HIM, DR. DOYLE.

I'M POS-ITIVE I CAN WORK OUT A DEAL HE WON'T BE ABLE TO REFUSE...!

YOU MUST BE **FASTER,** SCOTT! A FOE WOULD NOT BE FIRING **HARMLESS** MISSILES AT YOU!

I'M GOING AS FAST AS I **CAN,** VALENTINA.

IT AIN'T **HIS** FAULT HE'S A KLUTZ!

Y'KNOW, WAYNE, I'VE SAID IT **BEFORE,** BUT I FIGURE I CAN **NEVER** SAY IT **ENOUGH** TO YOU ...**SHUT UP!**

HI, VAL. JUST THOUGHT I'D DROP BY AND SEE HOW THE KIDS ARE MAKING OUT.

THEY DO **WELL,** JOSH. NONE OF THEIR FAULTS CANNOT BE **CORRECTED** THROUGH **PRACTICE.**

YEAH, I REMEMBER WHEN **I** FIRST STARTED PLAYING THE HERO. MAN, WE WERE SO **CLUMSY,** I CAN'T **BELIEVE** WE **SURVIVED** THOSE FIRST COUPLE OF MONTHS.

HEY, **REMEMBER** WHEN WE WENT UP AGAINST GENERAL IMMORTUS? THAT WAS OUR **FIRST** MISSION, WASN'T IT? I TRIED TO...

JOSHUA, **PLEASE!**

YOU DID NOT COME HERE TO CHECK ON THEIR PROGRESS, NOR TO MAKE THIS **INANE** SMALL TALK. **SAY** WHAT IT IS THAT IS ON YOUR MIND!

YEAH, YOU'RE **RIGHT.**

JOSHUA ...WHAT ARE YOU--?!?

N-NO... NO! STOP IT, JOSHUA ...:SOB!:... STOP!

DON'T PULL AWAY, BABY... NOT NOW!

I... OH, GOD, VAL, I'M SORRY, HONEY... BUT YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL...

...YOU'VE GOT TO SEE HOW HARD IT IS FOR ME TO BE SO CLOSE TO YOU ALL THE TIME... BUT NOT BE ALLOWED TO TOUCH.

HOW MANY TIMES MUST I... I TELL YOU...

WHAT? THAT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE YOU'RE IN THOSE BANDAGES? I TOLD YOU-- IT DOESN'T MATTER! ALL I CARE ABOUT IS THAT I LOVE YOU, VALENTINA...

:SOB!: AND ...I... OH, GOD! JOSHUA! WHY CAN YOU NOT JUST LET THIS BE?

DAMMIT, VAL, WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO US? I COULD FEEL THAT YOU STILL LOVE ME, TOO... THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN'T WORK OUT TOGETHER, BABE!

LOOK AT ME, JOSH -- THROUGH THE EYES OF A DOCTOR, AND NOT A LOVE-SICK FOOL!

DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE EVEN LOVE CAN OVER-COME... THIS!

I KNOW YOU HAVE STAYED WITH THE PATROL AS LONG AS YOU HAVE BECAUSE OF ME, BUT YOU HAVE A LIFE OUTSIDE THIS. GO... BACK TO IT AND FORGET... EH? WHAT WAS THAT?

CRASH!

OH!

VAL! SHUT IT DOWN! WAYNE'S IN TROUBLE!

HE JUST **STOOD** THERE... LIKE HE THOUGHT THE GIZMOS COULDN'T **TOUCH** HIM.

OH, MY...! I SHOULD HAVE BEEN **MONITORING** THEM!

SHUT UP ...AND HURRY! HURRY! BLASTED THING'S TRYIN' TO EAT ME!

KLIK!

HANG **TIGHT**, HAWKINS! HELP IS ON THE **WAY**!

MAKE THAT, IT'S **HERE**!

WAYNE... I... I WAS **DISTRACTED**. I AM SO **SORRY**. ARE YOU **INJURED**?

NAW... I **FORGOT** A **MACHINE** AIN'T GOT A **BRAIN** FOR MY POWERS TO AFFECT. GUESS I OUGHT TA BE **USED** TO THAT AFTER THE **PLASTIC MEN** AND **SHRAPNEL** WALKED ALL OVER ME.

FORGET IT, HUH? I'M OKAY.

MAN, I DO **NOT** WANT TO **BE** HERE WHEN ARANI SEES...

...HER **EXPENSIVE** TOY'S BEEN TURNED INTO A LOAD OF **SCRAP METAL**...

THIS IS MADDENING!

I HAVEN'T TRAVELED FROM CALIFORNIA TO KANSAS CITY ... CRAWLED THROUGH SEWAGE TO INFILTRATE THIS WRETCHED OLD STRUCTURE...

...ONLY TO BE FRUSTRATED BY FAILURE TO RECOVER ALL MY COMPONENTS! THE OLD MAN WAS TOO FRIGHTENED TO LIE ABOUT THEIR WHERE-ABOUTS --

LEXCORP 11679

--SO THEY MUST HAVE BEEN PUT INTO USE BY ROBOTMAN. THIS IS A COMPLICATION... THOUGH BY NO MEANS INSURMOUNTABLE. THEY CAN BE RETRIEVED.

AND THEY WILL BE... BECAUSE THEY ARE MINE!

I LEARNED OF THEIR EXISTENCE IN ONE OF MY RAIDS ON A LEXCORP FACILITY IN SEARCH OF KRYPTONITE TO POWER MY ROBOTIC BODY. WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS, THEY ARE SUPERIOR TO MY OWN PARTS-- PARTICULARLY THE TORSO--

--WHICH IS AMONG THE MISSING! MY MODIFICATIONS WILL ALLOW ME TO SEIZE CONTROL OF IT AND BRING IT TO ME...

... AND SHOULD ROBOTMAN BE CURRENTLY UTILIZING IT--

--IT WILL BE A SIMPLE MATTER TO CRUSH HIS OBJECTIONS ALONG WITH HIS SKULL!

BUT FIRST...!

LEXCORP 124

GET REAL, KID!

THE OBJECT O' THIS EXERCISE'S T'TAKE ME OUT, BUT IT DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU GUYS'D WORRY AN OLD LADY IN A DARK ALLEY!

OOOOFFF!

C'MON, SCOTT! WHAT'RE YA WAITIN' FOR?

I SAID ATTACK ...NOT DANCE WITH ME!

YIKES!

MAN, ARE YOU GUYS PATHETIC!

GOSH, IT'S NOT LIKE I GOT A LOT OF PRACTICE AT THIS IN MY NEW JERSEY HIGH SCHOOL.

WHY NOT? HIGH SCHOOLS WHERE I LEARNED!

OKAY, LET'S TAKE IT FROM THE TOP, AND MAYBE THIS TIME YOU'LL DO IT RIGHT, HUH?

HEY, LET'S SHOW THIS GUY WHAT HAND TO HAND'S ALL ABOUT, SCOTT!

YEAH!

BIG TALK, JUNIOR. LET'S... HUH?!

OWW! HEY, WATCH IT, CLIFF!

IT... IT AIN'T ME, SCOTTY... MY BODY...

YOU SEE ME LAUGHIN'? SOMETHIN' OUTSIDE O' ME'S SOMEHOW GOT CONTROL O' MY TORSO... I CAN'T STOP MYSELF!

...I... I CAN'T CONTROL IT NO MORE!

IF... IF THIS'S A JOKE, STEELE, IT'S NOT FUNNY.

DON'T STAND THERE STARIN' LIKE AN IDIOT, RHEA... GET HELP! PRONTO!

WE HEARD THE NOISE, CLIFF! WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON IN THERE?

STAY BACK, JOSH!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, CLIFF? IF THERE IS A DANGER, WE SHOULD...

CLIFF! HAVE YOU GONE MAD--?!

I TRIED T' WARN HIM...

...THAT I AIN'T IN CONTROL! I BEEN TAKEN OVER... GET OUTTA THE WAY!

TAKEN? BUT WHO... HOW IS SUCH A THING POSSIBLE?

THIS'S A NEW TORSO... THE BODY'S COMPUTERIZED SYSTEMS'RE IN HERE! THEY MUSTA BEEN MESSED WITH BEFORE I GOT IT!

WATCH IT, RHEA! I DON'T WANNA HURT YOU!

YO!

HELP ME, YOU GUYS! HE'S STRONGER THAN A HORSE!

WHAT IS KEEPING HIM?

ROBOTMAN'S RESISTANCE MUST BE MORE POWERFUL THAN I HAD ANTICIPATED. I'LL HAVE TO SEE THIS MYSELF.

COME!

HOLD HIM STILL! MY ICE HAS NO CHANCE TO HARDEN ABOUT HIM WHILE HE MOVES SO FAST.

YOU WANT TO TRY HOLDING HIM, ARANI?

JOSH... RHEA ...LEGGO! I THINK WE FOUND OUR MAN... OR WHAT-EVER!

A CASE OF THE *POT* CALLING THE KETTLE BLACK, *NO*, ROBOTMAN? YOU AND I ARE VERY *MUCH* THE SAME... A HUMAN BRAIN ENCASED IN A CYBERNETIC SHELL.

THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT *YOURS* IS ENCASED IN A SHELL THAT I CLAIM AS *MINE!*

OH, *NO!* IT'S *SHRAPNEL* AGAIN!

LOOK *AGAIN*, KID. I *READ* ABOUT HIM... HE'S CALLED *METALLO!*

!O!

THEN YOU KNOW I AM TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY!

MY BODY, ROBOTMAN... I WANT IT!

THESE... THINGS ARE CONSTRUCTED OF SPARE PARTS FROM CLIFF'S INVENTORY!

LESS ANALYZING AND MORE FIGHTING, VAL! METALLO DIDN'T BUILD THESE THINGS AS CONVERSATION PIECES!

YOU WASTE YOUR ENERGY IN RESISTING, ROBOTMAN! I WILL CRUSH YOU AND TAKE WHAT IS MINE!

METALLO'S CONTROL... WEAKENIN'!

IT'S TAKIN' A LOT FOR HIM T'CONTROL THEM DRONES O' HIS...

...AND NOW THAT I KNOW WHERE T'LOOK FOR THE PROBLEM, MY INTERNAL REPAIR SYSTEMS'RE WORKIN' ON OVER-RIDIN' HIS ALTERATIONS.

YEAH! THAT DOES IT!

JOSHUA--- BEHIND YOU!

YOU'VE BROKEN FREE! IT DOES NOT MATTER... I NEED NO ADVANTAGES TO SMASH YOU, ROBOTMAN!

AND THAT'S ANOTHER THING, UGLY... DON'T CALL ME ROBOTMAN NO MORE!

CHEEZ! IT LOOKS EVEN WORSE DOWN THERE THAN IT SOUNDS ...AND THAT AIN'T GOOD!

I OUGHTTA GET **DOWN** THERE AND **HELP** 'EM. EXCEPT...

...EXCEPT FOR THOSE **ROBOTS**. I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN **DO** ANYTHING AGAINST A BUNCH O' **MINDLESS MACHINES**...EXCEPT GET **HURT!**

MAYBE I OUGHTTA JUST...JUST STAY OUTTA THE **WAY**...

S-E!

OH, MY LORD! THEY'RE COMING TO **GET** US!

GANGWAY! WE'RE COMIN' THROUGH!

CALL THE COPS! THEY'VE GONE BER-SERK!

WE WERE **RIGHT!** THOSE **FREAKS** ARE **CRAZY!**

YOU'RE GETTIN' **NOWHERE**, METALLO! WE'RE **MATCHED** ABOUT **EVEN**...AND I GOT **FRIENDS** WITH ME!

I AM FAR FROM **ALONE**, FOOL--

--AND **MY** COMPANIONS SEEM TO BE **HANDILY** DEFEATING YOUR PATHETIC PARTNERS...

...FOR THEY CAN DO NO LESS THAN **FOLLOW** THE LEAD OF THEIR **MASTER!**

NOW, MY MINDLESS DRONES -- STRIKE!! DESTROY THE DOOM PATROL...!

MEANWHILE, IN SMALLVILLE, KANSAS...

I'M GLAD YOU COULD MAKE TIME FOR THIS PICNIC, CLARK. WE DON'T GET TO SPEND NEAR ENOUGH TIME TOGETHER.

I TRY TO GET BACK HOME AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE, LANA. IT'S KIND OF CHILLY -- WOULDN'T YOU LIKE YOUR SWEATER?

NO, THANKS, I'M FINE.

...RETURN TO OUR MUSICAL PROGRAM AFTER THE NEWS WITH GARY BURTON.

--BUT IT'S NOT OFTEN ENOUGH. YOU KNOW HOW IT GOES SOMETIMES... NO MATTER HOW I TRY TO SET ASIDE TIME FOR MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY, SOMETHING'S ALWAYS COMING UP THAT I CAN'T IGNORE.

THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR HOLDING DOWN TWO JOBS.

THANK YOU, MARTY. AT THE TOP OF THE NEWS...

WELL, YOU KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO FIND AN ASSISTANT IN MY LINE. I... WAIT! EXCUSE ME A SECOND, LANA...

...AS TO WHAT THE SUPER-VILLAIN IS DOING IN KANSAS...

...IN KANSAS CITY, REPORTS ARE COMING IN THAT THE RESIDENT SUPER-HERO GROUP, THE DOOM PATROL, IS ENGAGED IN A BATTLE WITH A BEING POLICE IDENTIFY AS METALLO. IT'S STILL UNCLEAR...

...SUPERMAN! I KNOW, I KNOW. YOU GO DO WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO DO. I'LL TELL YOUR FOLKS YOU MIGHT BE LATE FOR SUPPER.

AND ONE MORE THING, CLARK... BE CAREFUL, OKAY?

SORRY, LANA. MUCH AS I'D LOVE TO STAY FOR OUR PICNIC, DUTY CALLS! METALLO'S ONE OF MY FOES AND THAT MAKES IT A JOB FOR...

AREN'T I **ALWAYS?** BESIDES, THIS WON'T BE THE **FIRST** TIME I'VE FOUGHT METALLO... **OR** THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEATEN HIM.

SEE YOU **LATER,** LANA.

I WISH I WAS **REALLY** AS CONFIDENT AS I **SOUNDED,** BUT I DIDN'T WANT LANA TO **WORRY.**

METALLO WOULDN'T BE A **THREAT ORDINARILY,** BUT THERE'S **NOTHING** ORDINARY ABOUT THAT **KRYPTONITE-POWERED** HEART OF HIS--

--SINCE HE NEEDS IT TO **SURVIVE** AND IT'S THE ONE THING THAT I'M **SURE** CAN **KILL** ME!

I KNOW HE'S BEEN HITTING LUTHOR FOR THE KRYPTONITE, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH OF IT HE'S **GOT.**

STILL, EVEN A **SMALL** AMOUNT OF THE STUFF CAN KNOCK ME FOR A **LOOP--**

GARTH & CO.

--MAYBE EVEN **KILL** ME IF I'M EXPOSED TO IT **TOO** LONG. I'LL HAVE TO PLAY IT VERY **CAREFUL.**

THERE'S THE OLD UNION STATION UP AHEAD.

LOOKS LIKE THE FIGHTING'S **MOVED ON,** OR IS **OVER.**

DON'T TELL ME I GOT **LUCKY** ON THIS ONE AND THE PATROL'S **ALREADY** TAKEN CARE OF METALLO. I'D BETTER...OH! MY **LORD!**

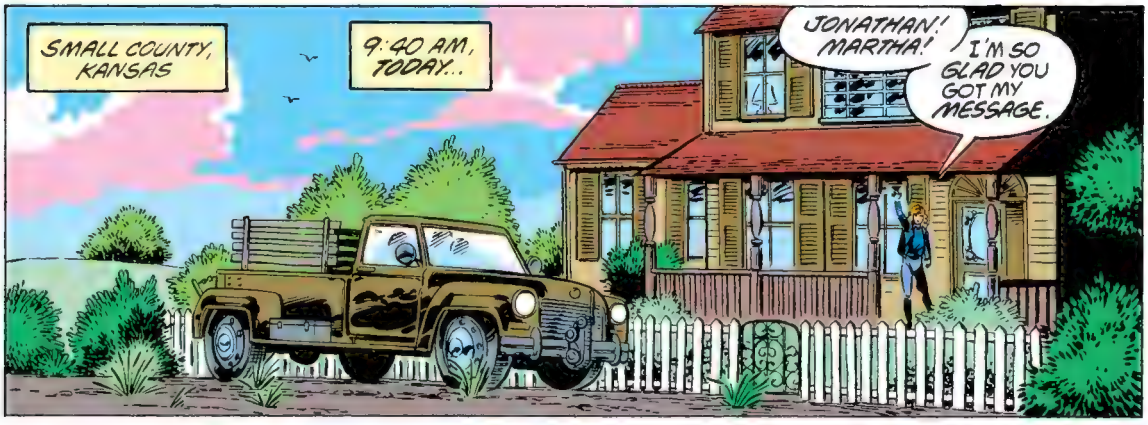
THE DOOM PATROL ...THEY'RE **NOT MOVING!** AND **WHERE'S** METALLO... AND **CLIFF STEELE...?!**

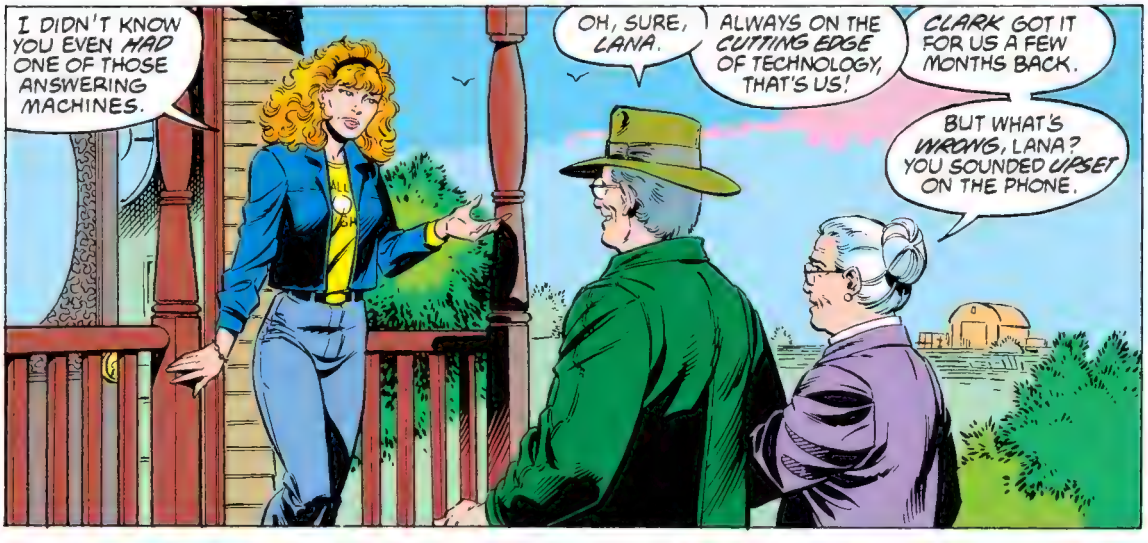
WHAT'S **HAPPENED?**

THANKS TO MONIKA LIVINGSTON FOR BACKGROUND INKS.

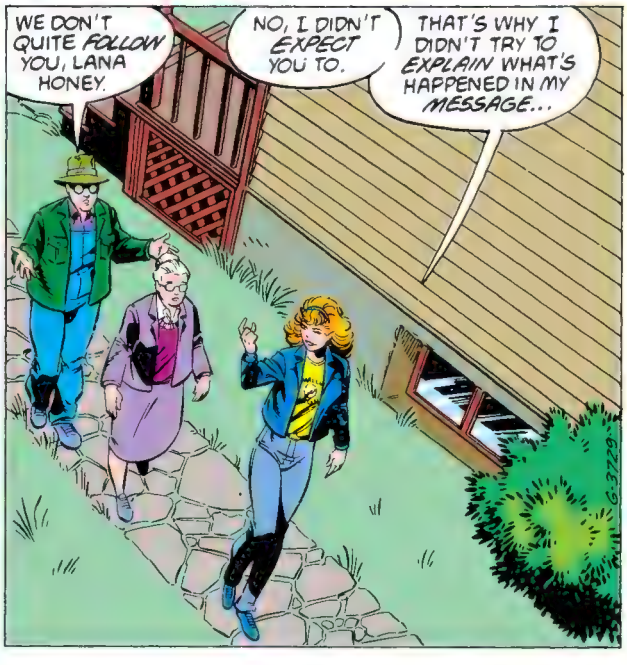
TO BE CONTINUED...*NEXT WEEK* IN *SUPERMAN #20!* AND *NEXT MONTH,* IN *DOOM PATROL #11--*

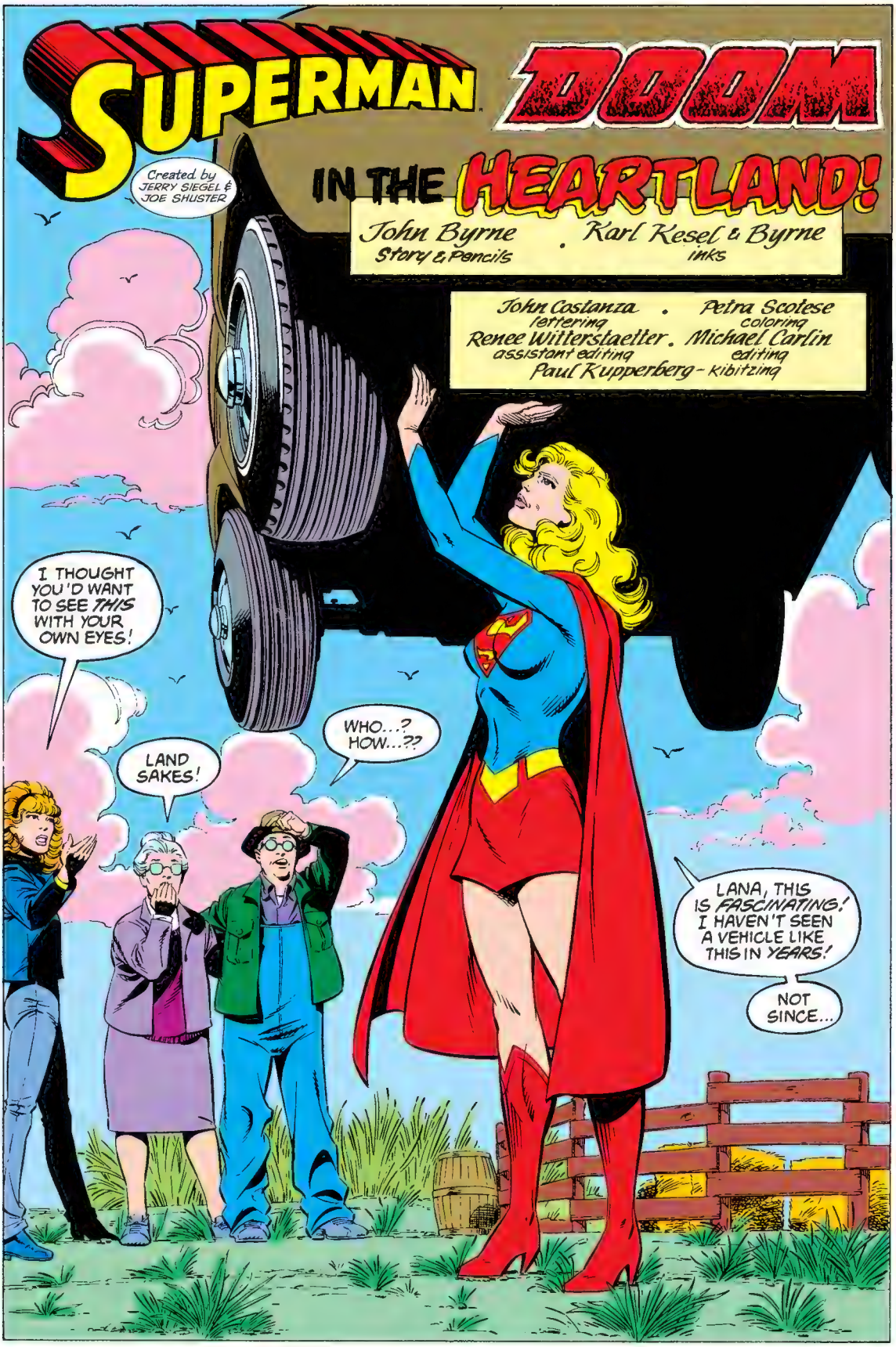
GARGUAX
COMES TO EARTH!


SMALL COUNTY, KANSAS
9:40 AM, TODAY...
JONATHAN! MARTHA!
I'M SO GLAD YOU GOT MY MESSAGE.

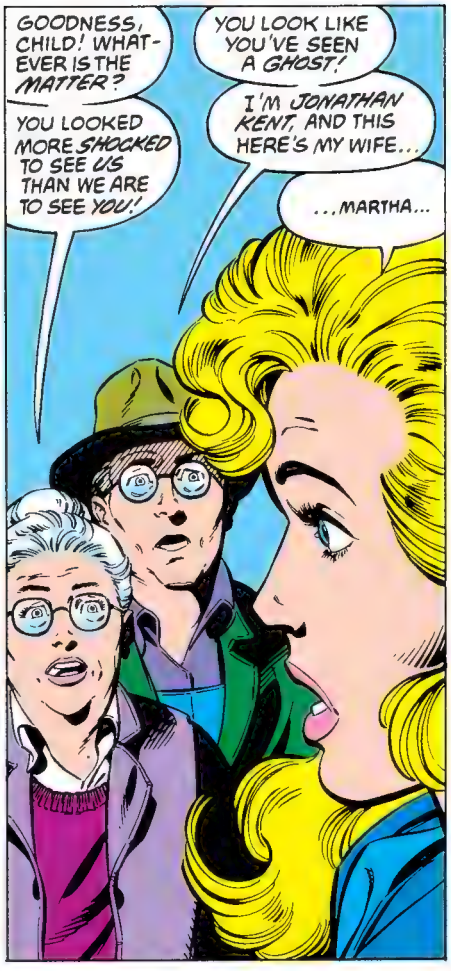

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU EVEN HAD ONE OF THOSE ANSWERING MACHINES.
OH, SURE, LANA.
ALWAYS ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY, THAT'S US!
CLARK GOT IT FOR US A FEW MONTHS BACK.
BUT WHAT'S WRONG, LANA? YOU SOUNDED UPSET ON THE PHONE.

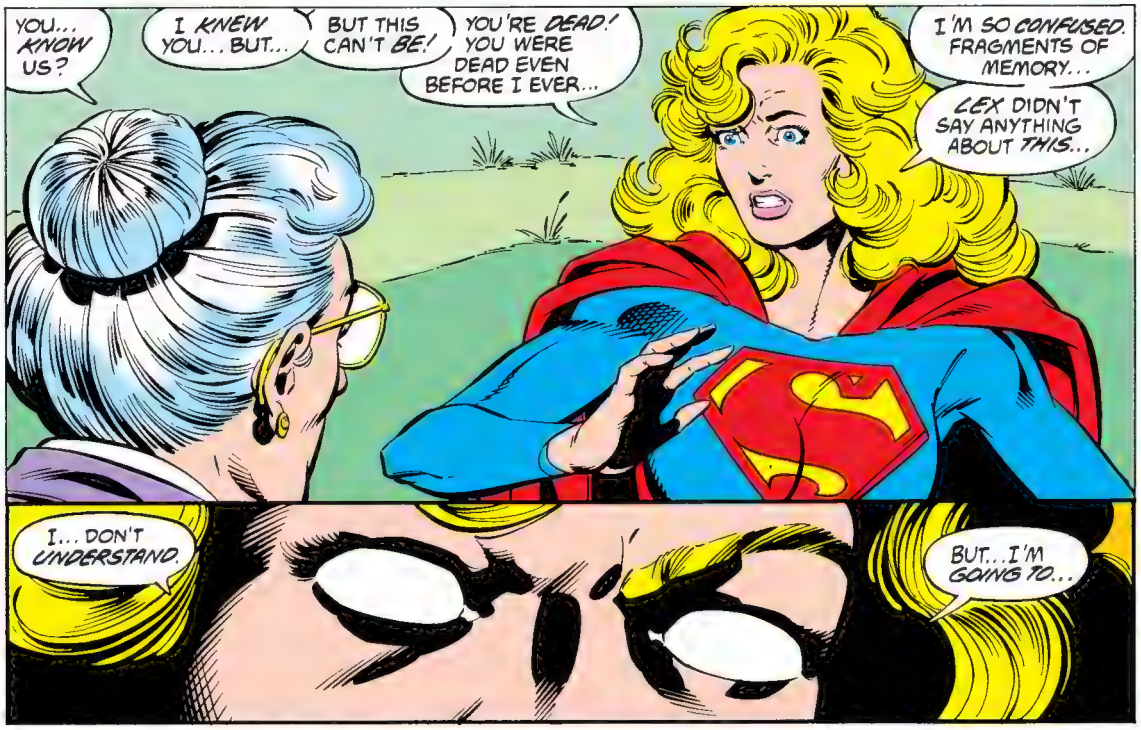
DID I?
WELL, "UPSET" IS MAYBE TOO STRONG A WORD.
"SURPRISED" WOULD BE BETTER...
OR "AMAZED."

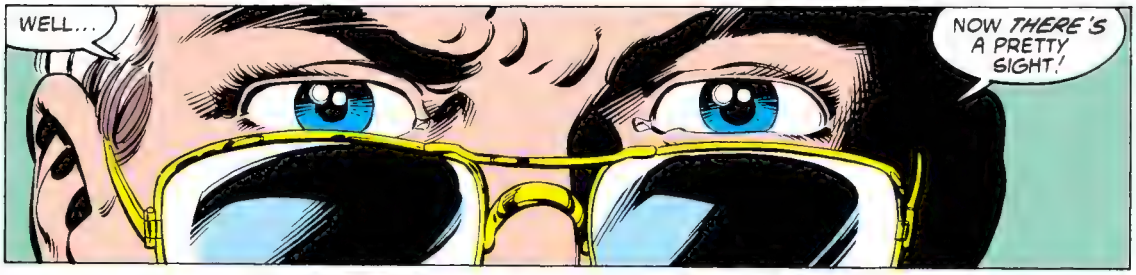

WE DON'T QUITE FOLLOW YOU, LANA HONEY.
NO, I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO.
THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T TRY TO EXPLAIN WHAT'S HAPPENED IN MY MESSAGE...


SUPERMAN
DOOM
IN THE HEARTLAND!
Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
John Byrne
Story & Pencils
Karl Kesel & Byrne
Inks
John Costanza
lettering
Petra Scotese
coloring
Renee Witterstaetter
assistant editing
Michael Carlin
editing
Paul Kupperberg - kibitzing
I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO SEE THIS WITH YOUR OWN EYES!
LAND SAKES!
WHO...? HOW...??
LANA, THIS IS FASCINATING! I HAVEN'T SEEN A VEHICLE LIKE THIS IN YEARS!
NOT SINCE...

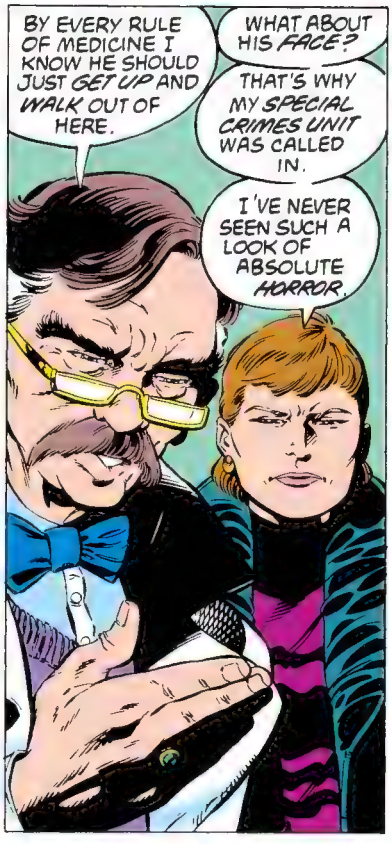
...NOT SINCE...
OH!
OH-HHHH!!

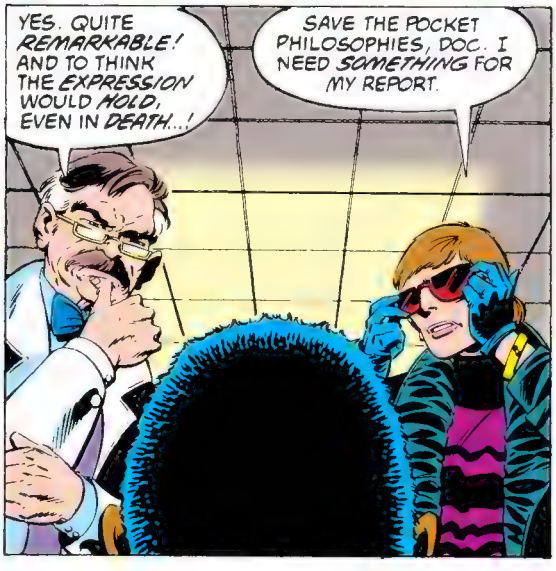

GOODNESS, CHILD! WHATEVER IS THE MATTER?
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST!
I'M JONATHAN KENT, AND THIS HERE'S MY WIFE...
YOU LOOKED MORE SHOCKED TO SEE US THAN WE ARE TO SEE YOU!
...MARTHA...


YOU... KNOW US?
I KNEW YOU... BUT...
BUT THIS CAN'T BE!
YOU'RE DEAD! YOU WERE DEAD EVEN BEFORE I EVER...
I'M SO CONFUSED. FRAGMENTS OF MEMORY...
LEX DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THIS...
I... DON'T UNDERSTAND.
BUT... I'M GOING TO...

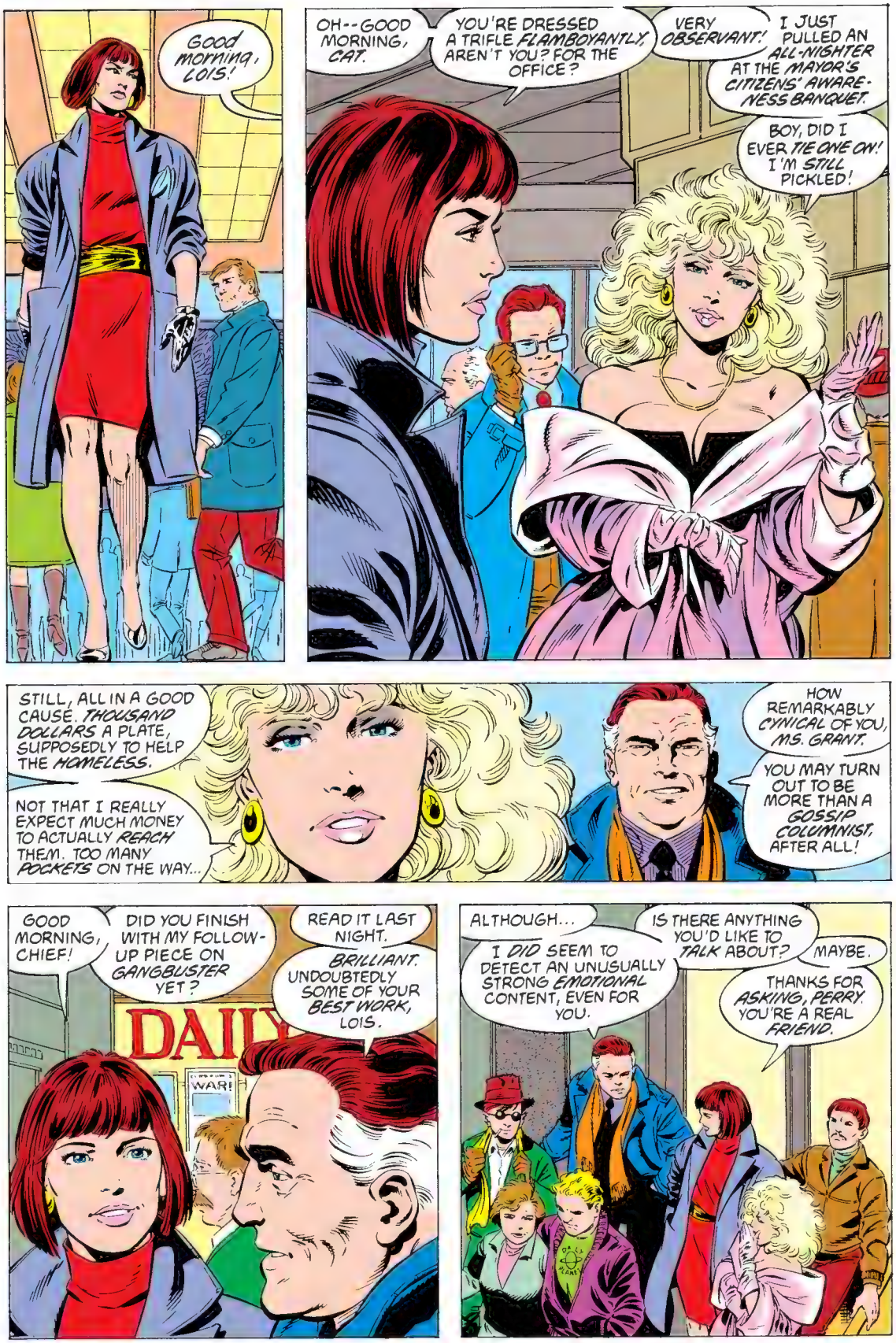

WELL...
NOW THERE'S A PRETTY SIGHT!

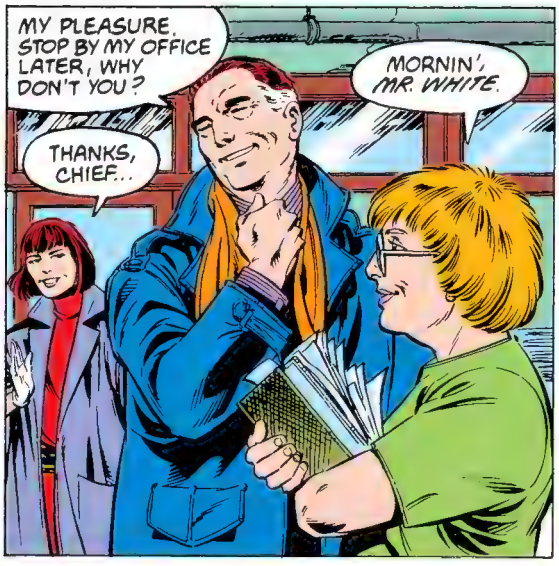
WHAT'S THE STORY, DOC?
WHAT KILLED HIM?
YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE, MARGARET.
THERE'S NOT A MARK ON HIM.

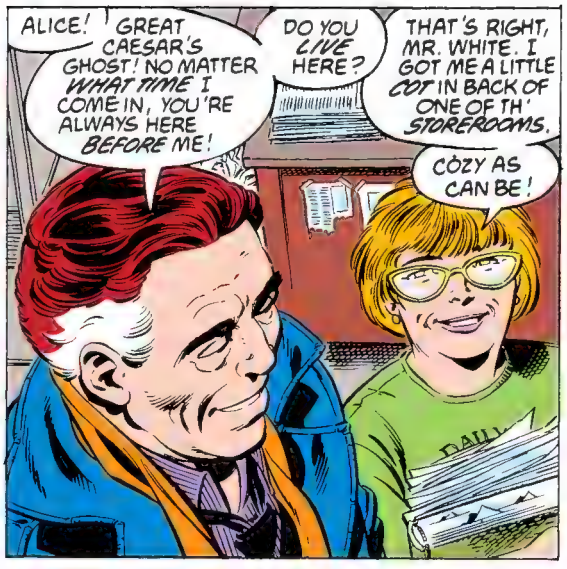

BY EVERY RULE OF MEDICINE I KNOW HE SHOULD JUST GET UP AND WALK OUT OF HERE.
WHAT ABOUT HIS FACE?
THAT'S WHY MY SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT WAS CALLED IN.
I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A LOOK OF ABSOLUTE HORROR.


YES. QUITE REMARKABLE! AND TO THINK THE EXPRESSION WOULD HOLD, EVEN IN DEATH...!
SAVE THE POCKET PHILOSOPHIES, DOC. I NEED SOMETHING FOR MY REPORT.

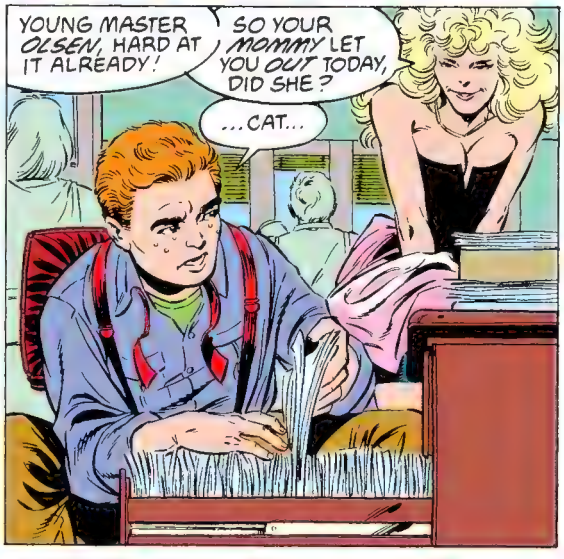
ALL RIGHT, MARGARET. HOW'S THIS...
IN THE BEST ASSESSMENT MY FORTY YEARS IN THIS LINE OF WORK HAS TO OFFER...
I'D SAY THIS MAN WAS QUITE SIMPLY FRIGHTENED TO DEATH!

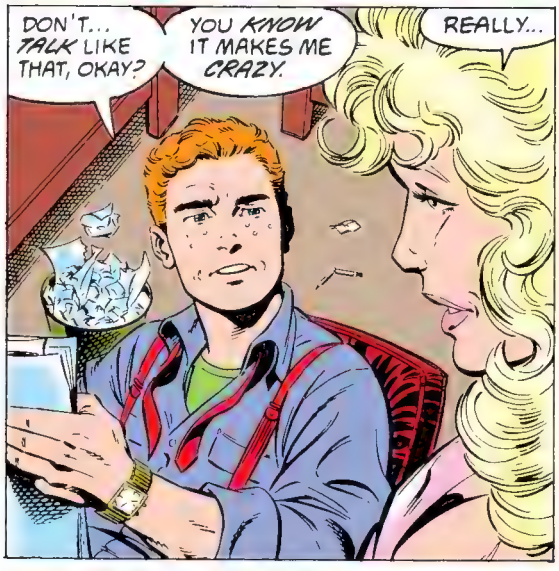

Good morning, Lois!
OH--GOOD MORNING, CAT.
YOU'RE DRESSED A TRIFLE FLAMBOYANTLY, AREN'T YOU? FOR THE OFFICE?
VERY OBSERVANT!
I JUST PULLED AN ALL-NIGHTER AT THE MAYOR'S CITIZENS' AWARENESS BANQUET.
BOY, DID I EVER TIE ONE ON! I'M STILL PICKLED!
STILL, ALL IN A GOOD CAUSE. THOUSAND DOLLARS A PLATE, SUPPOSEDLY TO HELP THE HOMELESS.
NOT THAT I REALLY EXPECT MUCH MONEY TO ACTUALLY REACH THEM. TOO MANY POCKETS ON THE WAY...
HOW REMARKABLY CYNICAL OF YOU, MS. GRANT.
YOU MAY TURN OUT TO BE MORE THAN A GOSSIP COLUMNIST, AFTER ALL!
GOOD MORNING, CHIEF!
DID YOU FINISH WITH MY FOLLOW-UP PIECE ON GANGBUSTER YET?
READ IT LAST NIGHT.
BRILLIANT. UNDOUBTEDLY SOME OF YOUR BEST WORK, LOIS.
DAILY
WAR!
ALTHOUGH...
I DID SEEM TO DETECT AN UNUSUALLY STRONG EMOTIONAL CONTENT, EVEN FOR YOU.
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT?
MAYBE.
THANKS FOR ASKING, PERRY. YOU'RE A REAL FRIEND.


MY PLEASURE. STOP BY MY OFFICE LATER, WHY DON'T YOU?
MORNIN', MR. WHITE.
THANKS, CHIEF..

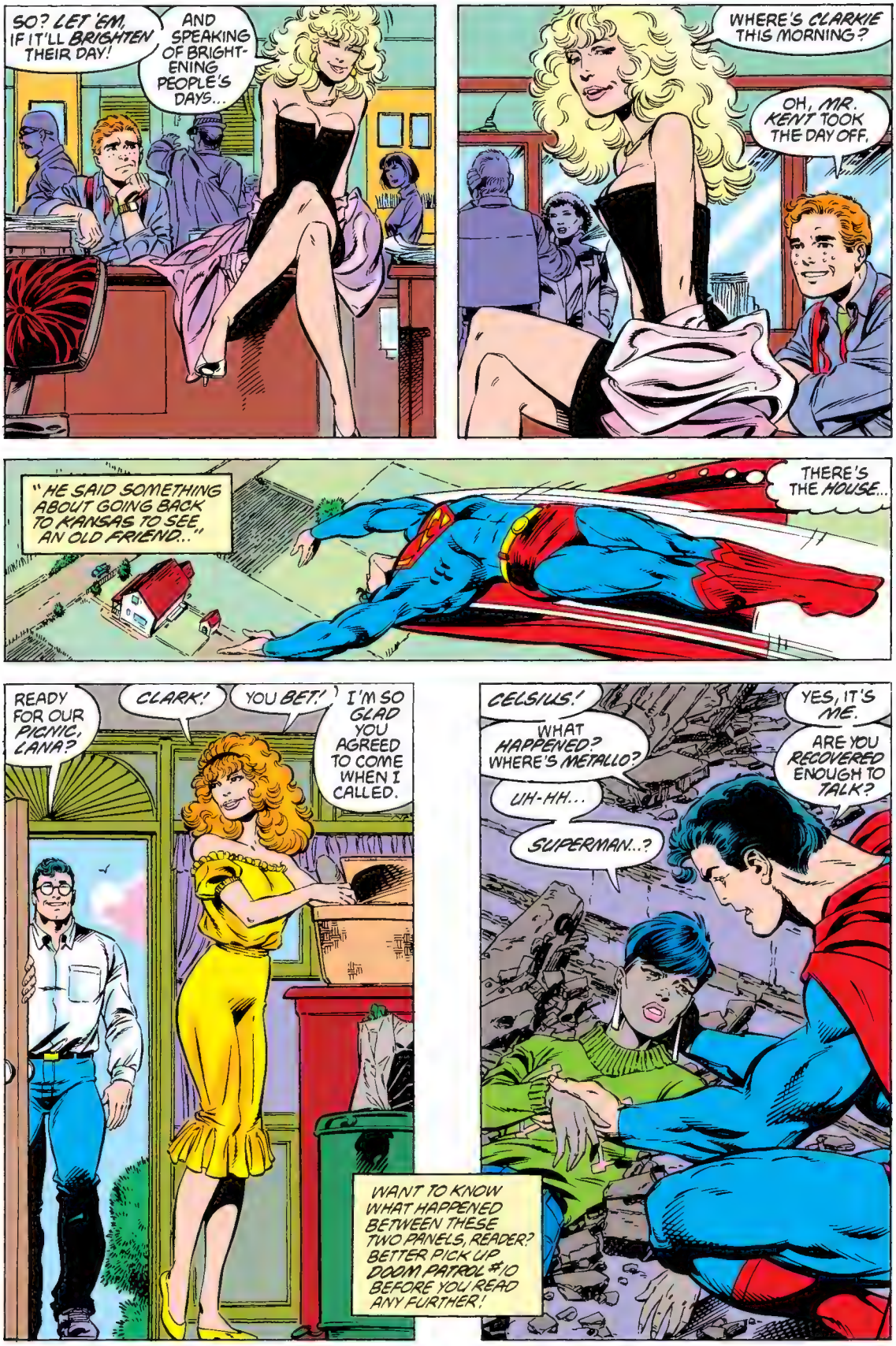

ALICE! GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST! NO MATTER WHAT TIME I COME IN, YOU'RE ALWAYS HERE BEFORE ME!
DO YOU LIVE HERE?
THAT'S RIGHT, MR. WHITE. I GOT ME A LITTLE COT IN BACK OF ONE OF TH' STOREROOMS.
COZY AS CAN BE!

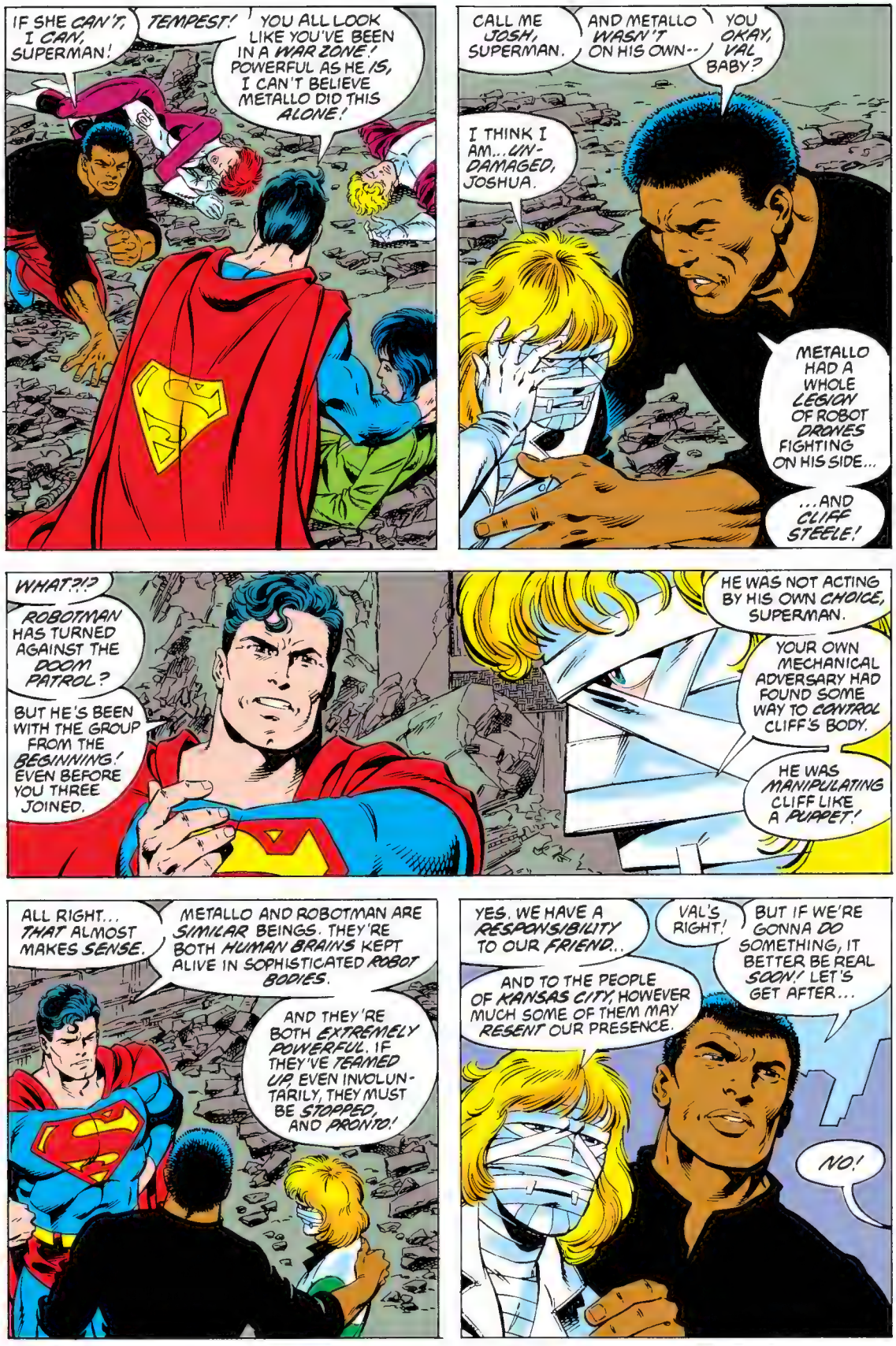
HAHAHA!
THAT'S VERY GOOD, ALICE.
NOW, DID YOU FIND THAT MATERIAL I WANTED?
WELL, WELL, WELL...


YOUNG MASTER OLSEN, HARD AT IT ALREADY!
SO YOUR MOMMY LET YOU OUT TODAY, DID SHE?
...CAT...

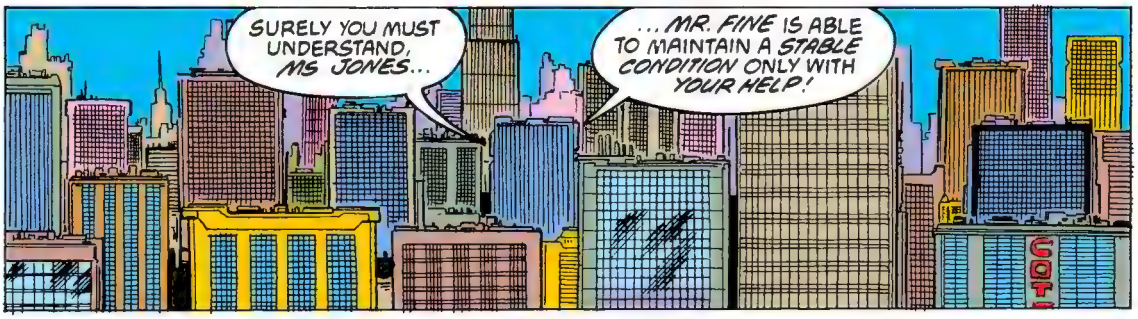

DON'T... TALK LIKE THAT, OKAY?
YOU KNOW IT MAKES ME CRAZY.
REALLY...

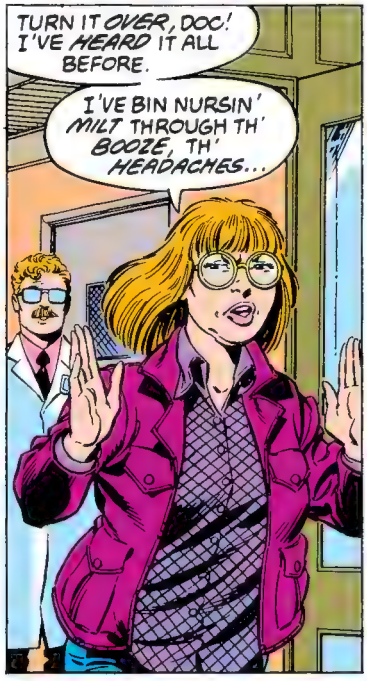
DON'T TELL ME YOU'D RATHER I MADE YOU CRAZY IN OTHER WAYS, JIMMY?
CAT...
PLEASE...
PEOPLE ARE WATCHING...


SO? LET 'EM. IF IT'LL BRIGHTEN THEIR DAY!
AND SPEAKING OF BRIGHTENING PEOPLE'S DAYS...
WHERE'S CLARKIE THIS MORNING?
OH, MR. KENT TOOK THE DAY OFF.
"HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT GOING BACK TO KANSAS TO SEE AN OLD FRIEND..."
THERE'S THE HOUSE...
READY FOR OUR PICNIC, LANA?
CLARK!
YOU BET!
I'M SO GLAD YOU AGREED TO COME WHEN I CALLED.
CELSIUS!
WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE'S METALLO?
UH-HH...
SUPERMAN...?
YES, IT'S ME.
ARE YOU RECOVERED ENOUGH TO TALK?
WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN THESE TWO PANELS, READER? BETTER PICK UP DOOM PATROL #10 BEFORE YOU READ ANY FURTHER!


IF SHE CAN'T, I CAN, SUPERMAN!
TEMPEST!
YOU ALL LOOK LIKE YOU'VE BEEN IN A WAR ZONE! POWERFUL AS HE IS, I CAN'T BELIEVE METALLO DID THIS ALONE!
CALL ME JOSH, SUPERMAN.
AND METALLO WASN'T ON HIS OWN--
YOU OKAY, VAL BABY?
I THINK I AM... UN-DAMAGED, JOSHUA.
METALLO HAD A WHOLE LEGION OF ROBOT DRONES FIGHTING ON HIS SIDE...
...AND CLIFF STEELE!
WHAT?!?
ROBOTMAN HAS TURNED AGAINST THE DOOM PATROL?
BUT HE'S BEEN WITH THE GROUP FROM THE BEGINNING! EVEN BEFORE YOU THREE JOINED.
HE WAS NOT ACTING BY HIS OWN CHOICE, SUPERMAN.
YOUR OWN MECHANICAL ADVERSARY HAD FOUND SOME WAY TO CONTROL CLIFF'S BODY.
HE WAS MANIPULATING CLIFF LIKE A PUPPET!
ALL RIGHT... THAT ALMOST MAKES SENSE.
METALLO AND ROBOTMAN ARE SIMILAR BEINGS. THEY'RE BOTH HUMAN BRAINS KEPT ALIVE IN SOPHISTICATED ROBOT BODIES.
AND THEY'RE BOTH EXTREMELY POWERFUL. IF THEY'VE TEAMED UP, EVEN INVOLUNTARILY, THEY MUST BE STOPPED, AND PRONTO!
YES, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR FRIEND...
VAL'S RIGHT!
BUT IF WE'RE GONNA DO SOMETHING, IT BETTER BE REAL SOON! LET'S GET AFTER...
AND TO THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS CITY, HOWEVER MUCH SOME OF THEM MAY RESENT OUR PRESENCE.
NO!

WHAT...??
ARANI? YOU DON'T WANT US TO GO AFTER CLIFF?
OF COURSE WE MUST GO AFTER HIM, JOSHUA.
BUT YOU ARE NOT COMING WITH US.
WHAT?
NOW JUST HOLD ON THERE, LADY! IF YOU THINK I'M GONNA LET VAL GO CHASIN' OFF INTO GOD KNOWS WHAT WITHOUT...
HEAR ME OUT, JOSHUA.
LOOK AROUND YOU! OUR NEW RECRUITS WERE ILL PREPARED FOR THE FURY OF CLIFF AND METALLO'S COMBINED ATTACK.
THEY NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION.
AND YOU ARE OUR PHYSICIAN, JOSHUA.
SOMETHING OF WHICH I SHOULD NOT NEED TO REMIND YOU!
ARANI IS RIGHT, JOSHUA.
SCOTT AND RHEA ARE HURT AND WAYNE SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED.
YOUR FIRST DUTY IS TO THEM!
ALL RIGHT...
I'LL STAY BEHIND.
BUT I AIN'T GONNA LIKE IT!


SURELY YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, MS JONES...
...MR. FINE IS ABLE TO MAINTAIN A STABLE CONDITION ONLY WITH YOUR HELP!


TURN IT OVER, DOC! I'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE.
I'VE BIN NURSIN' MILT THROUGH TH' BOOZE, TH' HEADACHES...

NOW YOU WANT ME TO HANG AROUND JUST SO HE'LL STOP THINKIN' HE'S FROM MARS...?
THE DELUSION IS VERY REAL TO HIM, MS JONES.
AND FOR SOMEONE WITH MR. FINE'S AMAZING POWERS...

YEAH, YEAH! UNFORTUNATELY, THEM POWERS NEVER DID HIM ANY GOOD UNTIL HE STARTED TA GO OFF HIS NUT!
AN' THEN ALL HE USED 'EM FOR WAS TO BUST UP THE CIRCUS WE USED TA WORK FOR AN' TRY TO KILL SUPERMAN!*
* In ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #438.

YES, I UNDERSTAND HOW DIFFICULT ALL THIS HAS BEEN FOR YOU, MS. JONES...
BUT AS MR. FINE'S DOCTOR...
IT'S YOUR JOB TO TAKE CARE OF HIM NOW!

ME, I GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO WITH MY LIFE!
MS JONES!
LOOK OUT!!

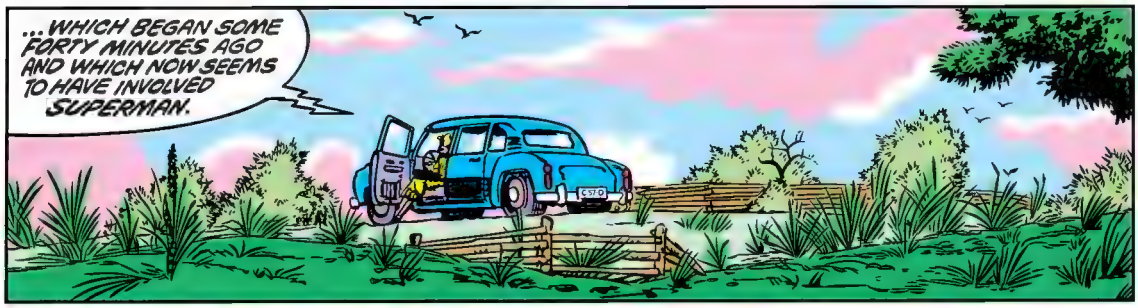
EEEEEEE
THUD
SCREEEEECH

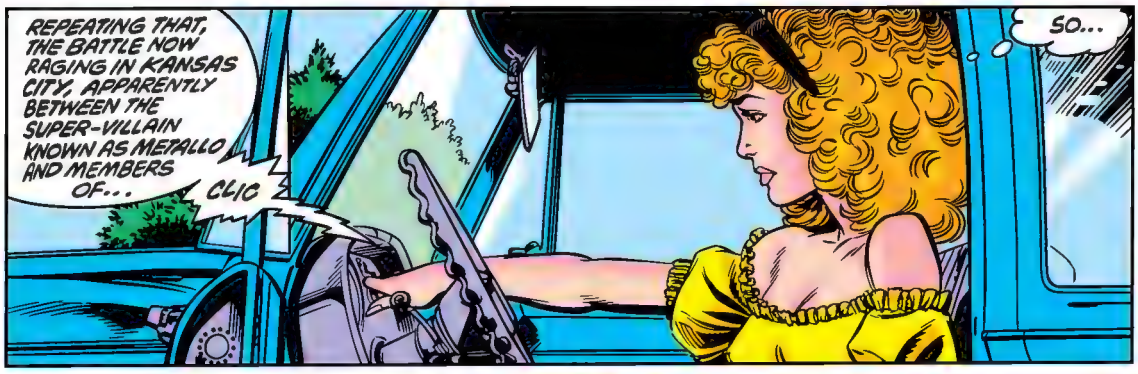
WELL...
AT LEAST IT'S NOT DIFFICULT TO TELL WHICH DIRECTION ROBOT... CLIFF STEELE AND METALLO TOOK!
THEY'VE CARVED THEMSELVES A PATH AS CLEAR AS A SIGNATURE.
NORMAL POLICE AND FIRE BRIGADE PEOPLE SEEM TO BE HANDLING THE DAMAGE AND INJURIES.
WHICH LEAVES ME FREE TO CONCENTRATE ON FINDING...
BINGO!
KLANG
WHONG!
GIVE IT UP, ROBOTMAN!
YOU KNOW I'M MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU!

WELL, EXCUSE ME, SKINNY, BUT I MUSTA BIN HOME SICK TH' DAY THEY VOTED YOU BIG MAN ON CAMPUS.
AN' LIKE I KEEP TELLIN' YA...
KLONG!
...DON'T CALL ME ROBOTMAN!!
IMPRESSIVE, STEELE.
BUT YOU OVERLOOK ONE VERY IMPORTANT DETAIL.
NOW THAT I HAVE TEMPORARILY RELINQUISHED CONTROL OF MY ROBOTIC DRONES...
...I CAN CONTROL YOU AGAIN!
N-NO!!

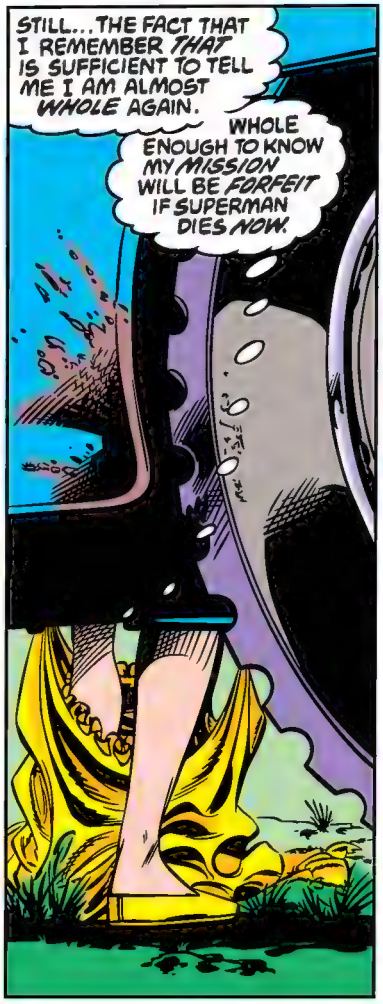
YES, STEELE!
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND YET? THE LAST TIME YOU REBUILT YOUR BODY YOU USED PARTS FROM LEXCORP!
PARTS I HAD ALREADY MODIFIED FOR MY OWN USE!
HE'S... NOT KIDDING!
HE'S GOT ME AGAIN!
MAKIN' MY OWN BODY WORK AGAINST ME!
THUS YOU FACE THE ULTIMATE IRONY OF BECOMING YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY!
I CAN SEND YOU ON AN UNENDING ORGY OF DESTRUCTION!
LIES
AH AH AH, METALLO!
DESTRUCTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY IS A DEFINITE NO-NO!

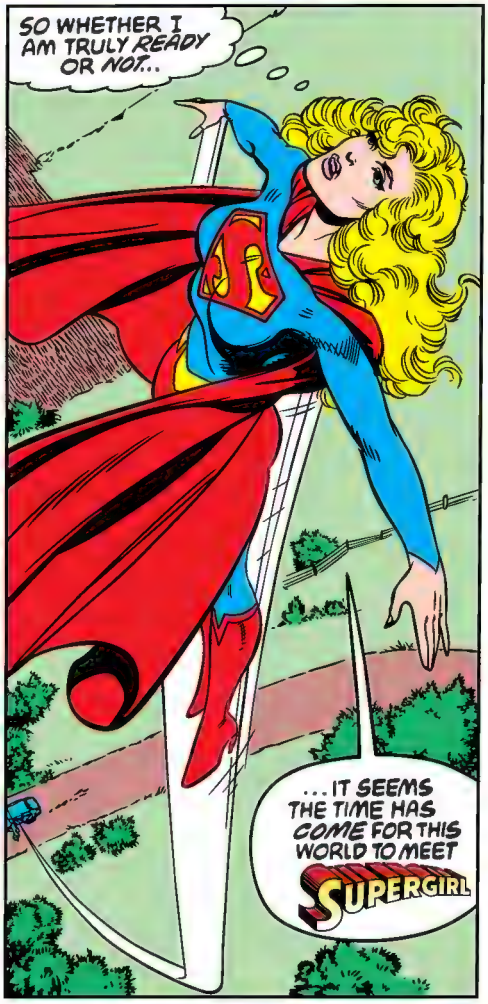
SUPERMAN?
I CAN'T BELIEVE I MISSED SEEING SUPERMAN!
HE'S SUCH A... HUNK!
WHAT AM I? CHOPPED LIVER?
WAYNE!
WHERE IN BLAZES HAVE YOU BEEN...?!?
WE COULD HAVE USED YOUR POWERS OF MIND CONTROL!
HEY, DON'T PULL THAT ON ME, MAN!
I SAW ALL THEM LITTLE ROBOTS! IF I'D TRIED TO MESS WITH 'EM, THEY'D'VE KICKED MY BUTT, TOO!
YOU IDIOT! THOSE ROBOTS WERE CONTROLLED BY METALLO! HE HAS A HUMAN BRAIN!
YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IMMOBILIZE HIM!
OKAY, SO I DIDN'T DO MY HOMEWORK!
YOU EXPECT ME TO KNOW THE DOPE ON EVERY SUPER-FREAK THAT COMES ALONG?
YES! IF YOU INTEND TO FUNCTION AS A MEMBER OF THE DOOM PATROL...
WELL, MAYBE I DON'T, BIG MAN!
MAYBE YOU CAN JUST TAKE YOUR STUPID GROUP AND
SCOTT...?
SCOTT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO HELP THE OTHERS!
TO HELP SUPERMAN

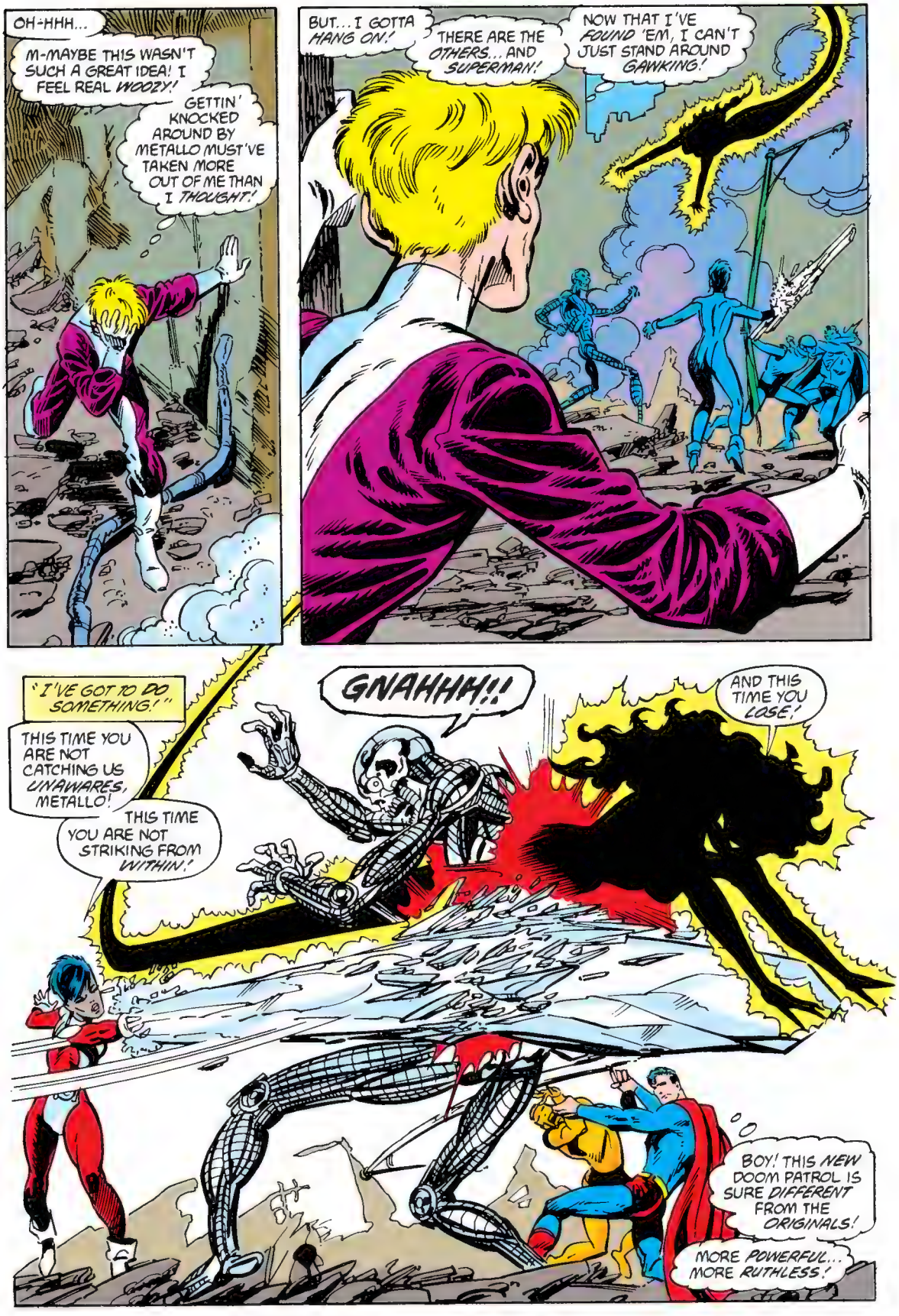

...WHICH BEGAN SOME FORTY MINUTES AGO AND WHICH NOW SEEMS TO HAVE INVOLVED SUPERMAN.

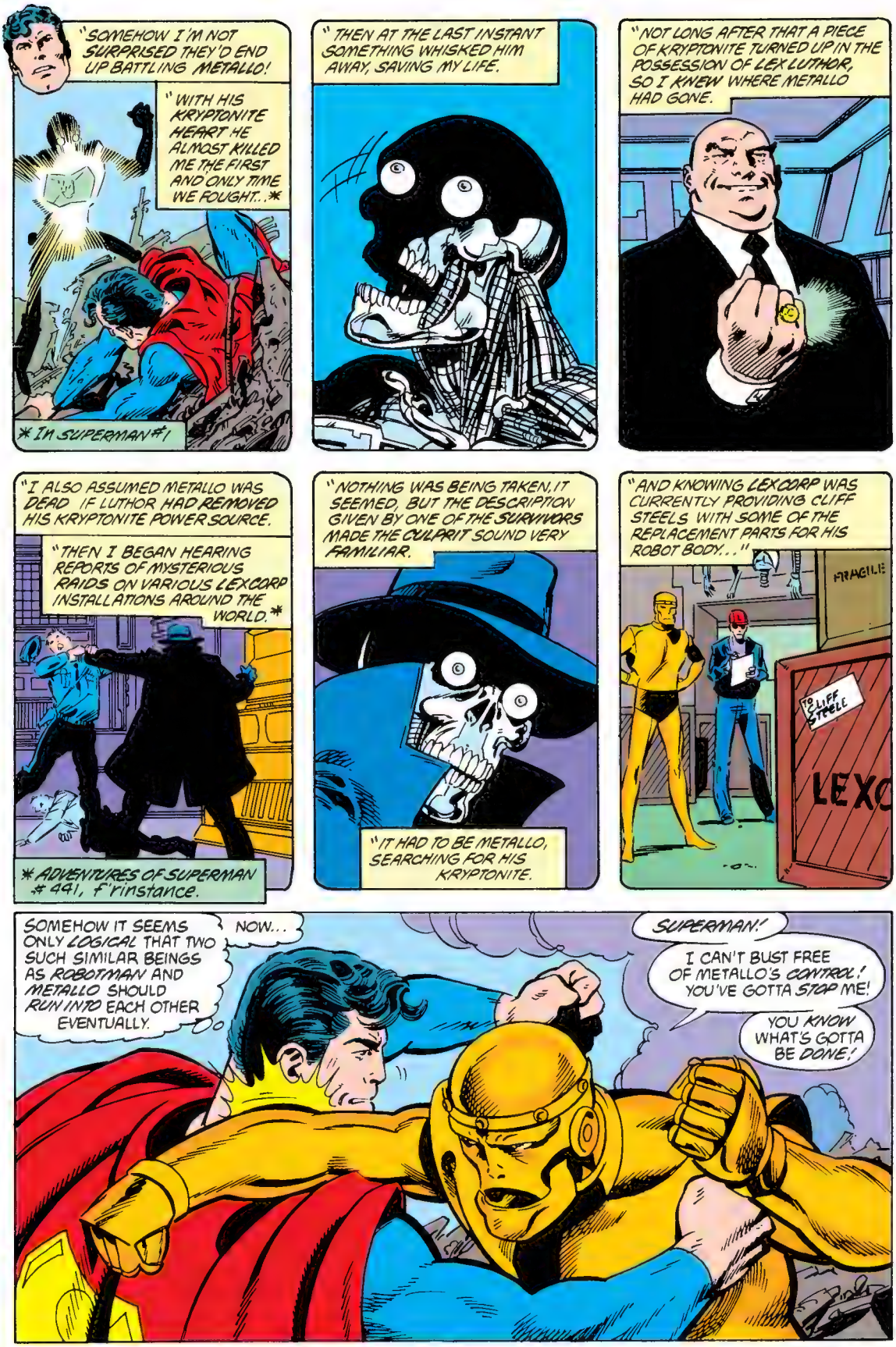

REPEATING THAT, THE BATTLE NOW RAGING IN KANSAS CITY, APPARENTLY BETWEEN THE SUPER-VILLAIN KNOWN AS METALLO AND MEMBERS OF...
CLIC
SO...

IT WOULD SEEM CLARK HAS NOT BEEN FARING SO WELL IN THIS AS HE HAD HOPED.
MY INSTINCT IS TO ACT, TO HELP..
BUT LEX CAUTIONED ME TO REMAIN IN HIDING UNTIL MY MEMORY IS FULLY RESTORED...

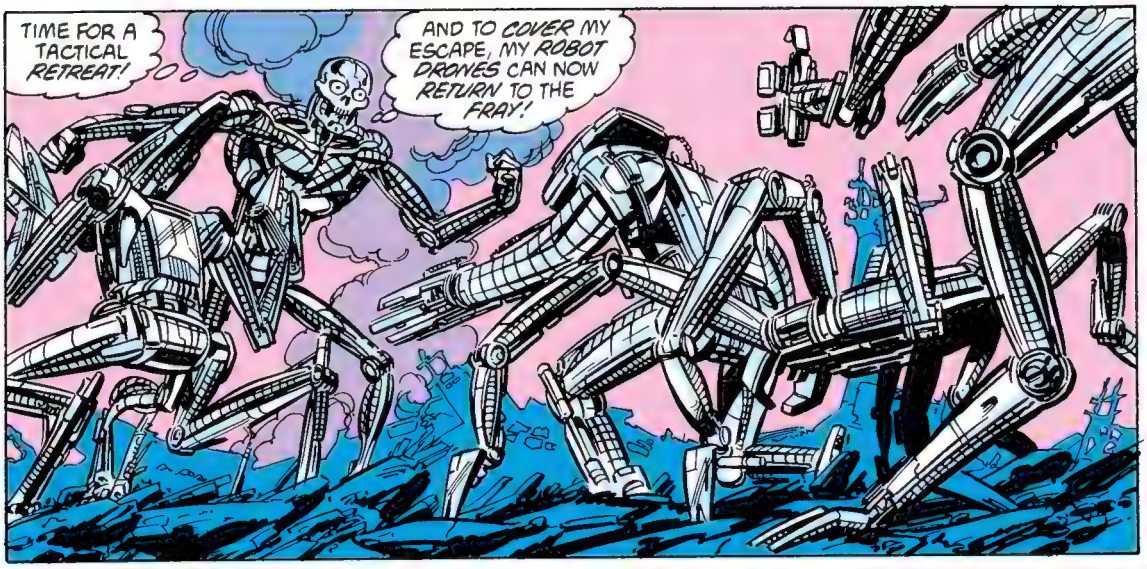

STILL...THE FACT THAT I REMEMBER THAT IS SUFFICIENT TO TELL ME I AM ALMOST WHOLE AGAIN.
WHOLE ENOUGH TO KNOW MY MISSION WILL BE FORFEIT IF SUPERMAN DIES NOW.

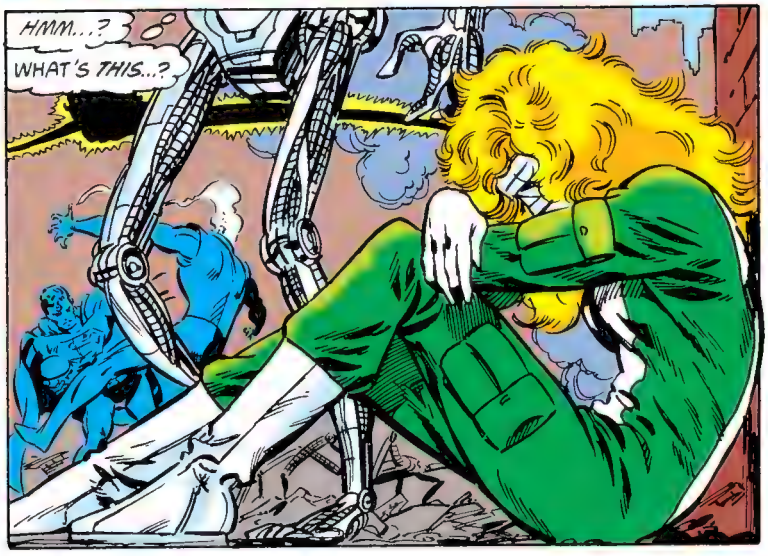

SO WHETHER I AM TRULY READY OR NOT...
...IT SEEMS THE TIME HAS COME FOR THIS WORLD TO MEET SUPERGIRL

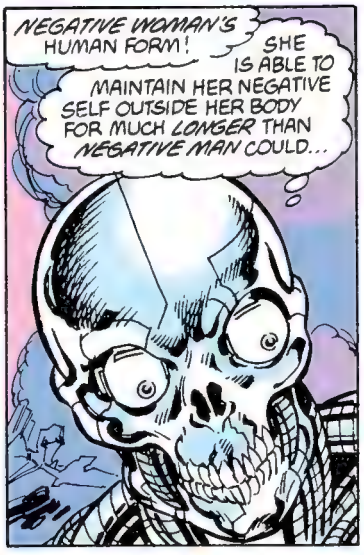

OH-HHH...
M-MAYBE THIS WASN'T SUCH A GREAT IDEA! I FEEL REAL WOOZY!
GETTIN' KNOCKED AROUND BY METALLO MUST'VE TAKEN MORE OUT OF ME THAN I THOUGHT!
BUT... I GOTTA HANG ON!
THERE ARE THE OTHERS... AND SUPERMAN!
NOW THAT I'VE FOUND 'EM, I CAN'T JUST STAND AROUND GAWKING!
"I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!"
THIS TIME YOU ARE NOT CATCHING US UNAWARES, METALLO!
THIS TIME YOU ARE NOT STRIKING FROM WITHIN!
GNAHHH!!
AND THIS TIME YOU LOSE!
BOY! THIS NEW DOOM PATROL IS SURE DIFFERENT FROM THE ORIGINALS!
MORE POWERFUL... MORE RUTHLESS!

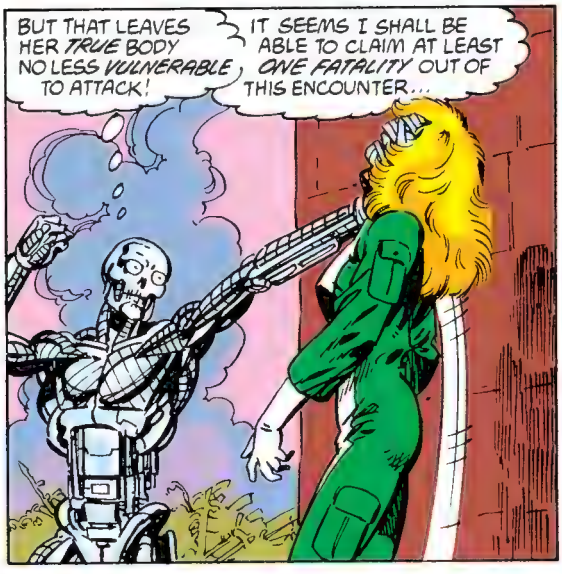

"SOMEHOW I'M NOT SURPRISED THEY'D END UP BATTLING METALLO!
"WITH HIS KRYPTONITE HEART HE ALMOST KILLED ME THE FIRST AND ONLY TIME WE FOUGHT...*
* IN SUPERMAN #1
"THEN AT THE LAST INSTANT SOMETHING WHISKED HIM AWAY, SAVING MY LIFE.
"NOT LONG AFTER THAT A PIECE OF KRYPTONITE TURNED UP IN THE POSSESSION OF LEX LUTHOR, SO I KNEW WHERE METALLO HAD GONE.
"I ALSO ASSUMED METALLO WAS DEAD IF LUTHOR HAD REMOVED HIS KRYPTONITE POWER SOURCE.
"THEN I BEGAN HEARING REPORTS OF MYSTERIOUS RAIDS ON VARIOUS LEXCORP INSTALLATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.*
* ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #441, f'rinstance.
"NOTHING WAS BEING TAKEN, IT SEEMED, BUT THE DESCRIPTION GIVEN BY ONE OF THE SURVIVORS MADE THE CULPRIT SOUND VERY FAMILIAR.
"IT HAD TO BE METALLO, SEARCHING FOR HIS KRYPTONITE.
"AND KNOWING LEXCORP WAS CURRENTLY PROVIDING CLIFF STEELS WITH SOME OF THE REPLACEMENT PARTS FOR HIS ROBOT BODY..."
FRAGILE
TO CLIFF STEELE
LEXC
SOMEHOW IT SEEMS ONLY LOGICAL THAT TWO SUCH SIMILAR BEINGS AS ROBOTMAN AND METALLO SHOULD RUN INTO EACH OTHER EVENTUALLY.
NOW...
SUPERMAN!
I CAN'T BUST FREE OF METALLO'S CONTROL! YOU'VE GOTTA STOP ME!
YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOTTA BE DONE!

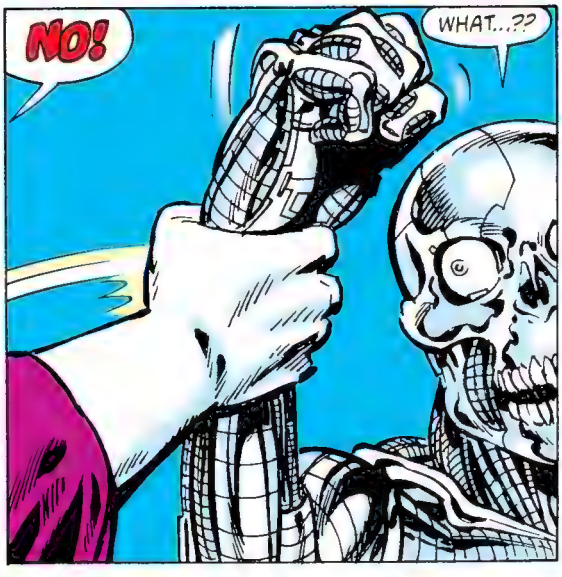
STEELE... NO! I CAN'T!
DAMMIT, YOU'VE GOT TO!
IT WON'T HURT ME... BUT IF YOU DON'T DO IT I'M SURE TO HURT SOMEBODY ELSE!
ALL RIGHT, STEELE...
BUT IF YOU'RE JUST BEING NOBLE...
DO IT! DO IT!
... I'LL NEVER LET YOU HEAR THE END OF IT!
WAY TO GO, SUPERMAN!
NOW YOU CAN TRASH MY ROGUE BODY WITHOUT KILLING ME!
BLAST!!
I NEVER EXPECTED STEELE TO ALLOW SUPERMAN TO DECAPITATE HIM LIKE THAT!
I WAS COUNTING ON THE DOOM PATROL RESISTING HARMING THEIR COMRADE, EVEN AT THE RISK OF THEIR OWN SAFETY.
BUT STEELE HAS BEEN IN HIS ROBOT FORM MUCH LONGER THAN I'VE HAD MINE.
HE'S ALMOST USED TO IT...

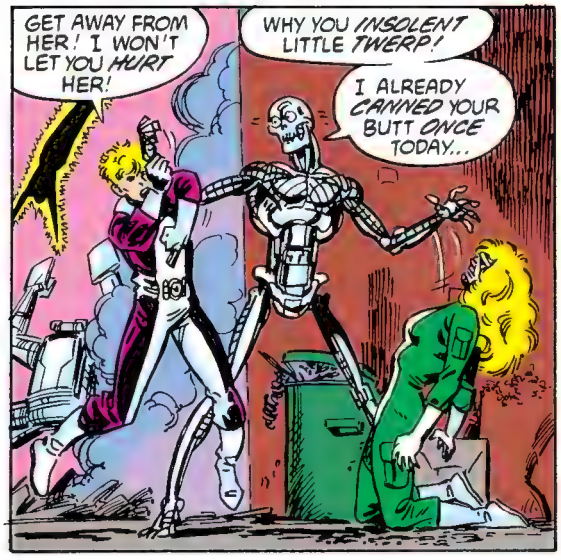

TIME FOR A TACTICAL RETREAT!
AND TO COVER MY ESCAPE, MY ROBOT DRONES CAN NOW RETURN TO THE FRAY!

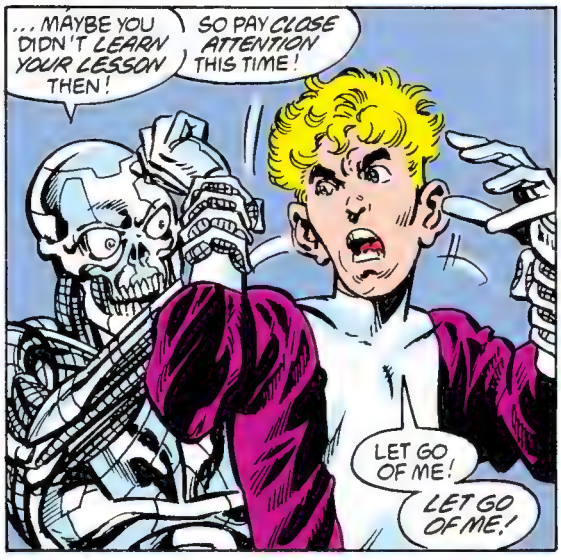

HMM...?
WHAT'S THIS...?

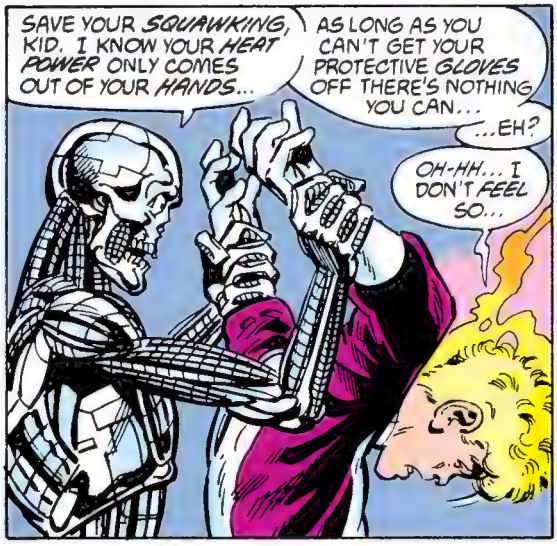

NEGATIVE WOMAN'S HUMAN FORM!
SHE IS ABLE TO MAINTAIN HER NEGATIVE SELF OUTSIDE HER BODY FOR MUCH LONGER THAN NEGATIVE MAN COULD...

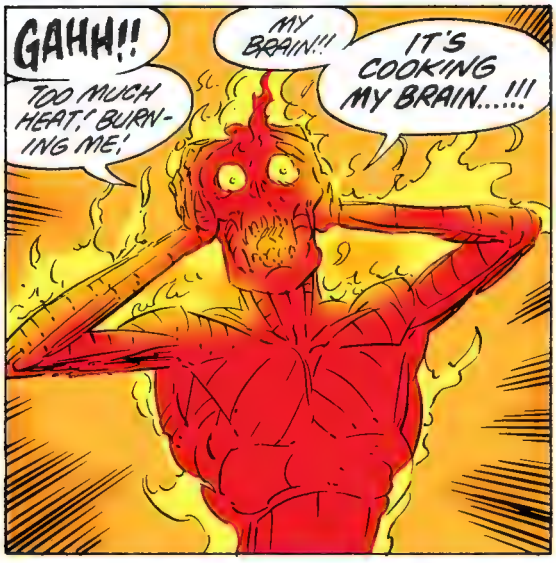

BUT THAT LEAVES HER TRUE BODY NO LESS VULNERABLE TO ATTACK!
IT SEEMS I SHALL BE ABLE TO CLAIM AT LEAST ONE FATALITY OUT OF THIS ENCOUNTER...


NO!
WHAT...??


GET AWAY FROM HER! I WON'T LET YOU HURT HER!
WHY YOU INSOLENT LITTLE TWERP!
I ALREADY CANNED YOUR BUTT ONCE TODAY...

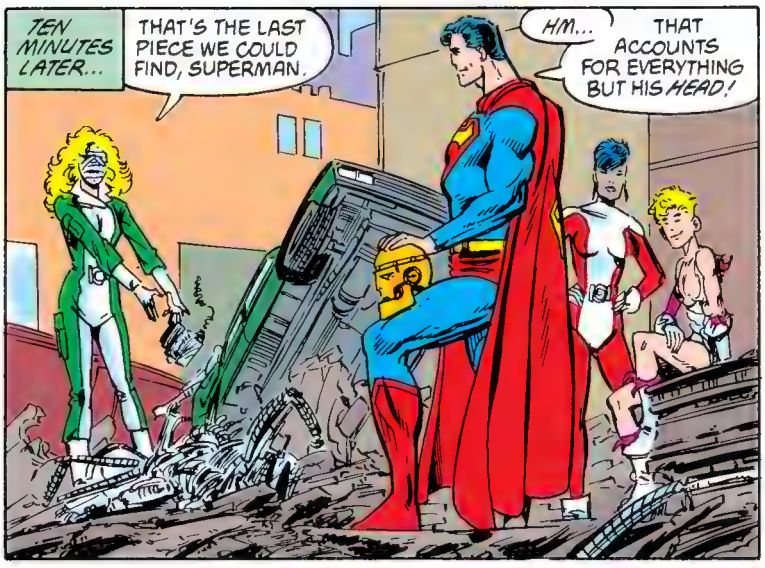

...MAYBE YOU DIDN'T LEARN YOUR LESSON THEN!
SO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION THIS TIME!
LET GO OF ME!
LET GO OF ME!


SAVE YOUR SQUAWKING, KID. I KNOW YOUR HEAT POWER ONLY COMES OUT OF YOUR HANDS...
AS LONG AS YOU CAN'T GET YOUR PROTECTIVE GLOVES OFF THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN...
...EH?
OH-HH... I DON'T FEEL SO...


GAHH!!
MY BRAIN!!!
IT'S COOKING MY BRAIN....!!!
TOO MUCH HEAT! BURNING ME!

HE IS RED HOT! ALL HIS METAL PARTS ARE SUPER-HEATED!
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW SCOTT WAS ABLE TO DO THAT...

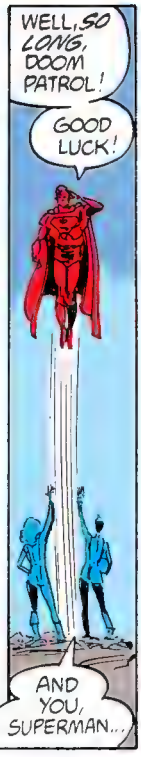
...BUT MY FREEZING POWER SHOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN THIS SITUATION!
TSSSSSSSST
"MOST EFFECTIVE!"
KLANG!
HOL-EE...
...SPIT!
THE DRONES!
WITHOUT METALLO TO GUIDE THEM, THEY ARE COLLAPSING!


TEN MINUTES LATER...
THAT'S THE LAST PIECE WE COULD FIND, SUPERMAN.
HM... THAT ACCOUNTS FOR EVERYTHING BUT HIS HEAD!

NOT TO WORRY, SUPES! IT'S GOTTA BE 'ROUND HERE SOMEWHERE.
I WONDER...
WE'LL FIND IT.

THE FACT THAT METALLO WAS ABLE TO SURVIVE THE REMOVAL OF HIS KRYPTONITE HEART SUGGESTS HIS UNKNOWN CREATOR BUILT IN SOME CONTINGENCY DEVICES.
YOU THINK THE HEAD MAY HAVE ESCAPED SOMEHOW, AFTER MY COLD BLAST CAUSED THE SUPER-HEATED METAL OF HIS BODY TO SHATTER?

I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED, ARANI. IT'S CERTAINLY NOT WITHIN RANGE OF MY TELESCOPIC VISION.
THANK YOU, SUPERMAN.
WE WILL GET CLIFF BACK TO OUR HEADQUARTERS AND ATTACHED TO A NEW BODY RIGHT AWAY.
HOWEVER... SPEAKING OF HEADS...
YEAH!
AN' HOPEFULLY ONE THAT DOESN'T HAVE ANY PARTS METALLO HAS BEEN SCREWIN' AROUND WITH!


WELL, SO LONG, DOOM PATROL!
GOOD LUCK!
AND YOU, SUPERMAN...

AND THAT TAKES CARE OF THAT...
FOR NOW.
METALLO SEEMS TO HAVE MADE GOOD HIS GETAWAY--BUT FOR THE MOMENT I DON'T THINK I NEED TO WORRY ABOUT HIM.
I THINK MY TIME WOULD BE BETTER SPENT WITH A LITTLE PEACEFUL R&R IN SMALLVILLE!
NEXT IN
SUPERMAN
21
THE SENSATIONAL SECRET OF SUPERGIRL!!! plus LEX LUTHOR and LEX LUTHOR...??

SUPERMAN

Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN

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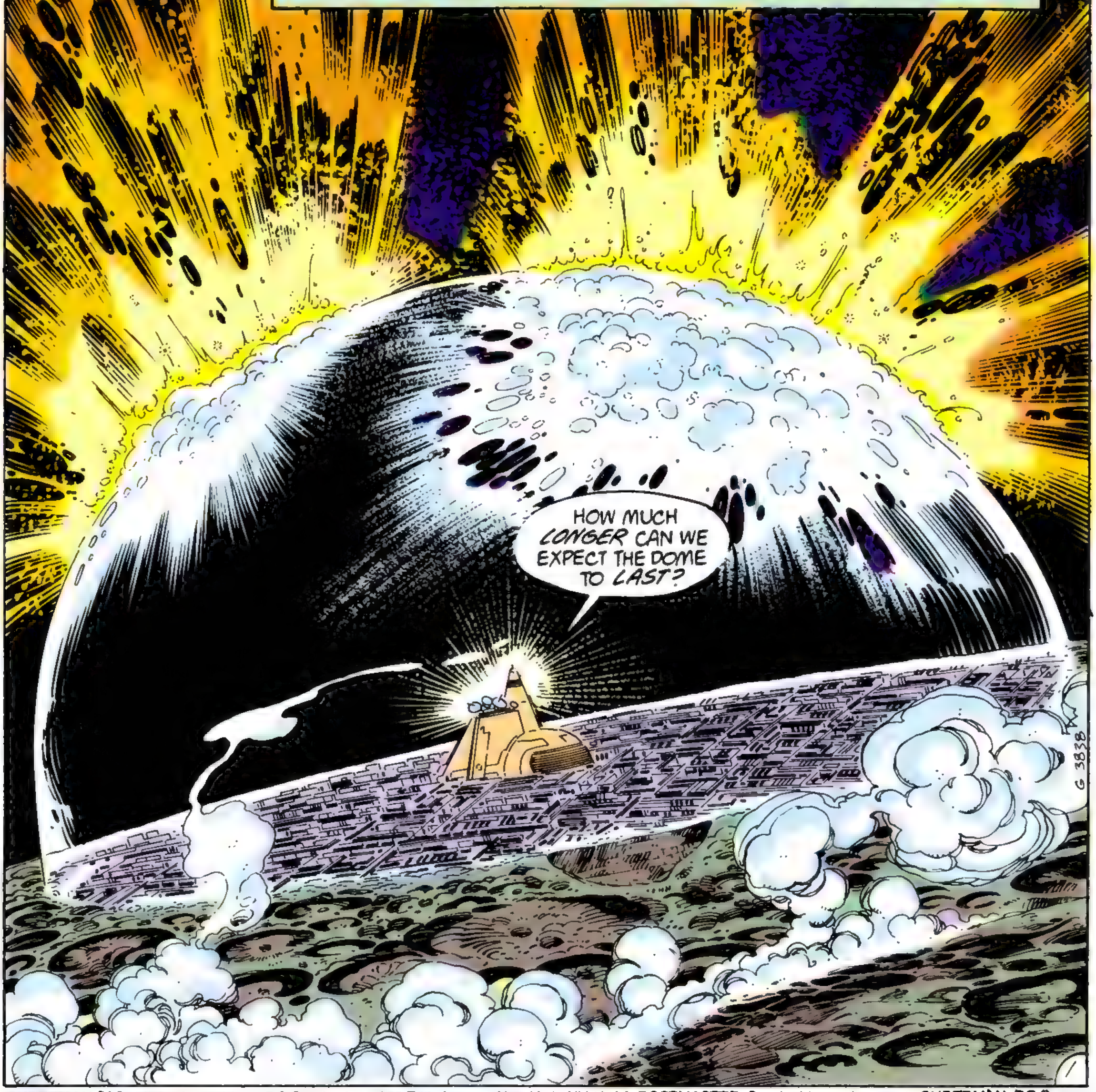

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IF THE *BARRAGE* CONTINUES AT ITS PRESENT *INTENSITY*...

...AND WE HAVE NO REASON TO ASSUME IT *WON'T*...

...I'D SAY WE HAVE *TEN HOURS*, MAYBE *TWELVE*, IF YOU STILL BELIEVE IN *MIRACLES*.

I DON'T *THINK* SO.

I'M AFRAID THE MAN IN CHARGE OF *MIRACLES* TURNED HIS *BACK* ON THIS POOR LITTLE PLANET A LONG TIME AGO!

LEVEL 9

STAND CLEAR

JUST ABOUT THE TIME WE *LOST* OUR GREATEST *HERO*, IN FACT.

IT'S A LITTLE *LATE* IN THE GAME TO GIVE OVER TO THAT KIND OF *PESSIMISM*, OLD FRIEND.

AND ANYWAY, WE STILL HAVE *HIGH HOPES* YOUR *MASTER PLAN* WILL *SAVE* US.

I WISH I *SHARED* YOUR ENTHUSIASM, *PETE*.

WHY NOT?

BUT I'M AFRAID THAT EVEN THOUGH THE PLAN WAS *MINE*, AS YOU SAY, I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO PUT ALL MY *FAITH* IN IT ANY MORE.

HAS SOMETHING *CHANGED*? SOMETHING GONE *WRONG* THAT YOU'RE NOT *TELLING* US ABOUT?

NO, NO.

NOT *YET*, ANYWAY. IT'S JUST THAT... WELL, THERE ARE *SO MANY VARIABLES*.

YOU WERE *WITH* HIM FOR, WHAT, TWENTY MINUTES? AND THAT WAS *TEN YEARS AGO*.

AND YET OUR *WHOLE PLAN* RESTS ON HIM BEING THE MAN WE ALL *NEED* HIM TO BE!

HOW CAN HE BE ANYTHING *ELSE*, IF HE'S REALLY *SUPERMAN*?

I DON'T *KNOW*.

BUT IT LOOKS AS IF WE'LL HAVE OUR *ANSWER* VERY *SOON* NOW...

"*SHE'S ABOUT TO MAKE CONTACT!*"

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.

SOMEONE HAS BEEN *FOLLOWING* ME SINCE I LEFT THE *DOOM PATROL* IN KANSAS CITY...*

*last issue-hope you didn't miss it!

QUICKEST WAY I KNOW TO FIND OUT WHAT'S *UP*...

...IS TO *HEAD* UP...

...AND *OVER* AT *SUPER-SPEED*...

THIS WAY I CAN LOOP BACK AND COME DOWN *BEHIND* MY MYSTERIOUS PURSUER.

HM...

WHOEVER IT IS MUST BE *PROTECTED* BY SOME KIND OF *LIGHT-WARPING* EFFECT.

MY *TELESCOPIC VISION* SEEMS TO JUST *SLIDE OFF* 'IM!

BUT MY *SUPER-HEARING* IS PICKING UP A *PULSE RATE* THAT SUGGESTS MY *QUARRY* IS *FEMALE*.

SHE'S DUCKING INTO THAT *CLOUD BANK*.

DON'T WANT TO LET HER GET *TOO FAR* OUT OF MY DIRECT *LINE OF SIGHT*.

SO... ANOTHER QUICK *BURST* OF SUPER-SPEED AND...

GOTCHA!

NOW, LET'S SEE *WHO*...

OH... *THERE* YOU ARE! I WAS AFRAID I'D *LOST* YOU!

GREAT GUNS!

A FLYING WOMAN IN A *VARIATION* OF MY *COSTUME*!

IS IT... SOME KIND OF *ILLUSION*...?

I'M NO *ILLUSION*, SUPERMAN!

I'M *SUPERGIRL*...!

AND I'M ALSO SOMEONE *ELSE*!

LANA?!?

WHAT IN THE NAME OF...??

HOW DID *YOU* GET POWERS LIKE *MINE*?

OH, THEY'RE NOT LIKE *YOURS*, SUPERMAN!

THEY'RE VERY, VERY *DIFFERENT* AS MY *CHAMELEON* POWER SHOULD TELL YOU.

AND AS TO HOW I *GOT* THEM...

THEY WERE GIVEN TO ME BY *LEX LUTHOR*!

MEANWHILE...

AW, *COME ON*, CHIEF! IT'S A *GREAT* IDEA FOR A STORY AN' *YOU KNOW IT!*

6

DO I?

THAT MUST BE WHY I REMAIN SO THOROUGHLY *UNCONVINCED*, OLSEN!

WHAT DO *YOU* THINK, LOIS?

I DON'T KNOW, PERRY.

I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK MAYBE YOUNG MASTER OLSEN IS *ON* TO SOMETHING HERE.

SURE I AM!

THE *SILVER BANSHEE* HAS STRUCK IN METROPOLIS *TWICE* SO FAR. BOTH TIMES, SHE *KILLED* HALF A DOZEN PEOPLE.

THE *FIRST* TIME SHE *ALMOST* KILLED *SUPERMAN!*

NOBODY SEEMS TO KNOW *WHO* SHE IS, OR WHERE SHE GOES, BUT I'M *SURE* I KNOW WHERE SHE *CAME* FROM.

YOU GOTTA LET ME FOLLOW IT UP, CHIEF! YOU GOTTA SEND ME TO *IRELAND!*

I DON'T "*GOTTA*" DO ANY SUCH THING, JIMMY. BUT...

ALL RIGHT. BOOK YOURSELF A TICKET TO THE *EMERALD ISLE*.

IN FACT, BOOK *TWO!*

SINCE SHE SEEMS TO *AGREE* WITH YOU, I'M SENDING *LOIS* ALONG TOO!!

7

LANA...NO! YOU CAN'T *MEAN* IT!

YOU *CAN'T* HAVE HAD DEALINGS WITH *SCUM* LIKE LUTHOR!

S-SCUM...?

WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING ABOUT?!?* LEX IS THE *GREATEST HERO*, THE MOST BRILLIANT *LEADER* IN THE WORLD!

SHE-SHE'S *HYPNOTIZED!*

BRAIN-WASHED!

SHE'S *GOT* TO BE!

LANA, NO! DON'T YOU *REMEMBER?* LUTHOR'S THE MAN WHO ONCE *KIDNAPPED* YOU...*TORTURED* YOU IN AN ATTEMPT TO FORCE YOU TO REVEAL MY *SECRET IDENTITY!**

WH-WHAT...??

* IN SUPERMAN #2

OH-HHH, NO!

I NEVER *THOUGHT*, NEVER *DREAMED...!!*

IF *WE* WERE ABLE TO GET *THROUGH*, *THEY* MUST HAVE BEEN, TOO!

"THROUGH"? *"THEY"?* LANA, WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT?

PLEASE...LET ME TAKE YOU BACK TO *METROPOLIS.*

MAYBE I CAN FIND SOMEONE TO *HELP* YOU...

METROPOLIS...??

NO...NO...METROPOLIS IS *GONE!* DESTROYED!

THIS IS ALL SOME KIND OF TERRIBLE *TRICK!*

YOU'RE ONE *OF THEM*, AND YOU'RE TRYING TO *DECEIVE* ME!

LANA...

BUT IT WON'T *WORK!!*

UNGH!!

WHAT...
...THE...
...HECK...
...DID...
...SHE...
...HIT...
...ME...
...WITH??

SOME KIND OF *PSYCHO-KINETIC BLAST!*
HER *POWERS* REALLY *ARE* OF A DIFFERENT ORDER THAN MINE.
HOW IN THE *WORLD* DID LUTHOR GIVE THEM TO HER?

AND--MAYBE MORE *IMPORTANT*--*WHY??*
SO FAR, SHE'S BEEN TALKING NOTHING BUT *NONSENSE!* HAS HE IMPLANTED SOME KIND OF *FALSE MEMORIES* IN HER MIND?
TRIED TO MAKE HER THINK OF ME AS AN *ENEMY?*
COMING BACK FOR *MORE,* "*SUPERMAN*"?

THE WAY SHE *SAID* THAT...
DOES SHE REALLY THINK I'M NOT...
UH-OH...
TRY YOUR *KRYPTONIAN* POWERS AGAINST *THIS!*

SHE'S *GONE!* TURNED HERSELF *INVISIBLE* TO ALL MY *SUPER-SENSES.*
BUT WHAT WAS THAT SHE SAID ABOUT "*KRYPTONIAN POWERS*"?
IF SHE DOESN'T BELIEVE I'M THE *REAL* SUPERMAN, HOW CAN SHE...

YOU'LL HAVE TO BE MORE *ALERT* THAN *THIS,* CREEP!

THIS IS REALLY GETTING *REDUNDANT!*

WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET *ANYWHERE* IF SHE KEEPS *BATTING* ME AWAY EVERY TIME I GET NEAR HER.

I THINK I'LL *MODIFY* MY APPROACH, JUST A LITTLE.

SINCE HER POWERS ARE SO *DIFFERENT* FROM MINE, LET'S *ASSUME* SHE *DOESN'T* HAVE X-RAY VISION...

... SO SHE *WON'T* SEE ME *TUNNELING* UNDER THE SURFACE...

...DESTINATION-- *LANA'S FARM!*

EVERYTHING LOOKS PRETTY *NORMAL...*

BUT MAYBE I CAN FIND SOME INDICATION OF WHAT HAPPENED TO...

HUH?

MMMUMMPH!

LANA...??

MA? PA?

WHAT IN THE WORLD...?!?

CLARK!

YOU'VE GOT TO GET *AWAY* FROM HERE! THERE'S A *CRAZY* SUPER-WOMAN *POSING* AS ME!!

I'VE... *MET* HER. BUT SHE'S NOT *POSING*, LANA. EVEN DOWN TO THE *MOLECULAR* LEVEL, SHE *IS* YOU.

I'VE *CHECKED!*

BUT... BUT HOW CAN THAT *BE?* HOW CAN THERE BE *TWO* OF ME?

TWO LANAS...? A SUPERMAN COSTUME...? KRYPTONIAN...?

OF COURSE!

IF IT WAS A *SNAKE* IT WOULD HAVE *BITTEN* ME!

TAKE CARE OF MA AND PA, LANA...

I'VE GOT SOME SERIOUS *DISILLUSIONING* TO DO...!!

WHICH FIRST REQUIRES LURING THE LADY OUT OF HIDING.

OKAY, "SUPERGIRL..."

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN!

WHAT'S HIS *GAME?*

I DON'T POSSESS ANYTHING *NEAR* A KRYPTONIAN'S INCREDIBLE *SPEED*...

HE COULD LEAVE ME *MILES* BEHIND WITHOUT EVEN *TRYING*...

AND YET IT SEEMS AS IF HE'S *NOT* TRYING!

HE'S NOT EVEN *APPROACHING* HIS TOP SPEED.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

BUT WITH MY *MEMORY* STILL SO PATCHY, SO *CONFUSED*...

...THE ONLY THING OF WHICH I'M *ABSOLUTELY* SURE IS...

I'VE GOT TO *CAPTURE* HIM!

GOOD! SHE'S DROPPED HER *INVISIBILITY* SHIELD.

MAYBE SHE CAN'T USE TOO MANY OF HER POWERS IN *COMBINATION*.

TIME TO *WONDER* ABOUT THAT *LATER*.

METROPOLIS DEAD AHEAD!

NOW, IF I'VE PIECED ALL THIS TOGETHER *CORRECTLY*...

M-METROPOLIS...??

BUT... BUT THAT CAN'T *BE!*

THEY *DESTROYED* METROPOLIS. IT WAS ONE OF THE *FIRST* TO GO!

TAKE IT *EASY*, LANA.

EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE *OKAY*. YOU CAN *TRUST* ME.

I DON'T KNOW *WHY* YOUR MEMORY IS SO SCREWED UP, BUT THIS *IS* REAL, AND I *AM* SUPERMAN.

WILL YOU GIVE ME THE CHANCE TO *PROVE* IT?

I...

YES...

ALL RIGHT, CLARK...

SOMEHOW THIS MAKES... SENSE...

I ASSURE YOU IT WILL MAKE EVEN *MORE*, AFTER I FIT THE LAST PIECE INTO THIS PUZZLE.

FOLLOW ME, SUPERGIRL...

AND WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T CALL ME *CLARK!*

I... WON'T...

DON'T CRY WIDOWS AND ORPHANS TO *ME*, CLANCY.

LEXCORP OWNS THAT WHOLE HOUSING PROJECT, LOCK, STOCK AND SHRINKING PROPERTY VALUES.

I INTEND TO SEE IT *LEVELED* BY SEPTEMBER FIRST!

M... M... M...

GOOD MORNING, LEX.

WHAT...?

SUPERMAN!!

WHAT THE HELL ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?

AND WHO THE DEVIL IS *THIS* SUPPOSED TO BE?

YOUR *SISTER?*

JUST A *FRIEND*, LEX. SOMEONE I'D LIKE TO *INTRODUCE* TO YOU.

SUPERGIRL, *THIS* IS *LEX LUTHOR.*

THIS...??

...LUTHOR...??

...BUT HE'S NOT...

I MEAN, HE'S NOTHING *LIKE*...

I'M *GLAD* TO *HEAR* IT, SUPERGIRL.

NOW, IF YOU'LL *EXCUSE* US, LEX...

SUPERMAN, I'M STILL... *CONFUSED.*

I *THOUGHT* MY MEMORIES WERE STARTING TO COME *BACK* TO ME.

THAT'S WHY I CHOSE TO *REVEAL* MYSELF WHEN I DID.

BUT THIS MAN YOU CALL LEX LUTHOR...

...IS *NOT* THE SAME LUTHOR *YOU* KNOW.

I REALIZED THAT AS SOON AS I FOUND THE *REAL* LANA... THAT IS, *MY* LANA.

MAYBE I CAN *CLARIFY* THINGS A LITTLE FOR YOU, SUPERGIRL.

YOU SAID METROPOLIS WAS *DESTROYED.* AND YET, HERE WE ARE IN METROPOLIS.

YOU REFERRED TO MY POWERS BEING OF *KRYPTONIAN ORIGIN..*

...YET, SOMEHOW YOU THOUGHT I WAS AN *IMPOSTOR.*

EVEN THOUGH I'M THE *ONLY* SURVIVING KRYPTONIAN ON THIS PLANET, MAYBE IN THIS UNIVERSE.

AND *THAT'S* THE ANSWER.

YOU'RE FROM ANOTHER WORLD, ANOTHER *UNIVERSE,* WHERE THERE WERE -- OR *ARE* -- *OTHER* KRYPTONIANS!

"A WORLD I LEARNED ABOUT SOME MONTHS AGO WHEN I MET A GROUP OF YOUNG MEN WHO CALLED THEMSELVES THE *LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES.* *

* This happened in SUPERMAN #8, too.

"THEY WERE ALMOST AS CONFUSED AS YOU ARE, SUPERGIRL, WHEN THEY MET *ME.* YOU SEE, THE ONLY SUPERMAN THEY THOUGHT EXISTED WAS THE GROWN-UP VERSION OF A LONG-TIME ALLY OF THEIRS...

"A YOUTH KNOWN TO THEIR WORLD AS

SUPERBOY

"WE SOON DISCOVERED IT WAS ALL PART OF AN INSIDIOUS PLOT CRAFTED BY A BEING KNOWN ONLY AS *THE TIME TRAPPER.*

"BUT NOT BEFORE I FOUND MYSELF IN A *SMALLVILLE* VERY *DIFFERENT* FROM MY HOMETOWN...

"BATTLING A YOUNGER VERSION OF MYSELF WHO SEEMED EVEN MORE *POWERFUL* THAN ME.'

I... *REMEMBER.*

YOU AND I DID NOT ACTUALLY *MEET* THAT TIME, SUPERMAN, BUT MOST OF SMALLVILLE SAW YOUR BATTLE WITH SUPERBOY.

BUT ONLY *PETE ROSS* REALLY GOT *INVOLVED.*

YES. PETE *FOUND* ME AFTER I FIRST ARRIVED IN YOUR REALITY, SUPERGIRL.

I WAS PRETTY *ZONKED* FROM THE STRAIN OF THE JOURNEY. HE HELPED ME GET TO MA AND PA KENT'S HOUSE.

HE THOUGHT I WAS *SUPERBOY,* ARTIFICIALLY ACCELERATED TO ADULTHOOD BY SOMETHING HE CALLED *RED KRYPTONITE.*

AFTER I HELPED SUPERBOY ESCAPE THE TRAPPER'S CLUTCHES, IT WAS PETE, ALONG WITH THE KENTS AND THE LEGIONNAIRES, WHO EXPLAINED TO ME WHAT WAS GOING ON.

AND WE *NEVER SAW SUPERBOY AGAIN,* AFTER THAT NIGHT.

NOT IN THE *TEN YEARS* SINCE IT ALL HAPPENED.

TEN YEARS!

OF COURSE! THAT OTHER SMALLVILLE WAS ALSO IN THE *PAST!* A DECADE HAS GONE BY FOR YOU, IN WHAT WAS ONLY A FEW *WEEKS* FOR ME.

BUT... IT SOUNDS LIKE YOUR MEMORY IS BACK ON *TRACK,* SUPERGIRL?

YES. IT *IS...*

WHAT...?

DON'T *WORRY,* SUPERMAN.

WHAT YOU SEE IS MERELY THE *VISIBLE EFFECT* OF THE DIMENSIONAL INTERFACE THAT BROUGHT ME TO YOUR WORLD.

IT WON'T *HARM* YOU, AS YOU CAN TELL.

BUT IT *WILL* TRANSPORT US BOTH TO *MY WORLD!*

LIGHTS!

YOU'VE DONE *WELL,* LANA! WITHOUT YOU WE COULD NEVER HAVE BROUGHT HIM *THROUGH!*

LOOKS AS IF IT'S MY TURN TO MAKE THE *INTRODUCTIONS.*

SUPERMAN, *THIS* IS *LEX LUTHOR.*

WELCOME, SUPERMAN.

WELCOME TO THE *END OF THE WORLD!*

NEXT IN THE ACTION FANS OF SUPERMAN #444

THE SUPERGIRL SAGA CONTINUES WITH MORE SHOCKS AND SURPRISES FOR THE MAN OF STEEL... DON'T MISS...

PARALLEL LIVES MEET AT INFINITY...

IN ONE WEEK!

I... DIDN'T EXPECT HIM TO TAKE IT THIS HARD.

IN THIS HE IS MUCH LIKE *SUPERBOY*. HE CARRIES THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD...

...EVEN IF IT'S NOT *HIS* WORLD.

JONATHAN KENT 1912 1975

BUT IT *IS*, PETE.

IT'S AS MUCH MY WORLD AS THE ONE I *CAME* FROM. PERHAPS EVEN *MORE SO*, SINCE IT WAS *CREATED* IN PART BECAUSE OF ME.

NEVERTHELESS, YOU SERVE YOURSELF ILL, MY FRIEND, IF YOU ASSUME *RESPONSIBILITY*.

YEAH. IF ANYONE IS *RESPONSIBLE*, I'D SAY IT'S THE *LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES*.

NO, IT'S NOT *FAIR* TO BLAME THE LEGION.

I DIDN'T KNOW THEM VERY WELL, BUT FROM WHAT I SAW, I DON'T THINK THEY WOULD HAVE HANDLED THIS BUSINESS AS THEY DID IF THERE WAS ANY WAY THEY *COULD* HAVE ANTICIPATED...

...THIS!

PARALLEL LIVES MEET AT INFINITY...

SUPERMAN Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

JOHN BYRNE / JERRY ORDWAY — SCRIPTER - CO-PLOTTERS - PENCILLER
DENNIS JANKE — INKER
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SUPERMAN IS RIGHT. FROM WHAT YOU WERE ABLE TO TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH THE LEGION, PETE, I'M SURE THEY HANDLED THE AFFAIR AS BEST THEY COULD.

ESPECIALLY GIVEN THAT THEY WERE ALL DISTRAUGHT OVER THE DEATH OF SUPERBOY.

I STILL FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE HE'S DEAD.

IT'S A... STRANGE FEELING. AS IF PART OF ME HAD DIED.

PERHAPS THAT IS A VALID FEELING, SUPERMAN. AFTER ALL, SUPERBOY WAS A PART OF YOU, WHATEVER THE MACHINATIONS OF THE TIME TRAPPER...

YES.

I GUESS I'VE NEVER REALLY STOPPED TO CONSIDER ALL THAT WAS IMPLIED BY WHAT HE DID. THE REAL CRUX OF HIS SCHEME TO DESTROY THE LEGION...

"AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE BEING WHO CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE TIME TRAPPER WAS CREATED AT THE INSTANT TIME ITSELF BEGAN, WITH THE SO-CALLED BIG BANG THAT BEGAN OUR--MY--UNIVERSE.

"I DIDN'T HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH THE TRAPPER HIMSELF DURING MY BRIEF ADVENTURE WITH THE LEGION AND SUPERBOY...*

"...SO I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THE WAY HIS MIND WORKS, OR EVEN IF WORDS LIKE 'HIS' AND 'MIND' ARE APPROPRIATE.

"I KNOW THAT HE BUILT HIMSELF A VAST CITADEL AT THE END OF TIME, AND I KNOW...

* IN SUPERMAN #8 AND ACTION #591

"...THAT ONE DAY HIS SCANNING OF ALL THE MOMENTS OF TIME, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, REVEALED TO HIM THE EXISTENCE OF THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES.

"I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY HE DID WHAT HE DID NEXT...

"...BUT FOR SOME REASON HE DECIDED TO FIND OUT WHAT IT WAS THAT HAD CAUSED THE LEGION TO FORM IN THE FIRST PLACE."

AND HERE WE SEE A REPRESENTATION OF SUPERBOY, THE GREATEST HERO OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

BECAUSE OF THE LOSS OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE PAST CAUSED BY THE GREAT DISASTER, WE KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT SUPERBOY...

IN FACT, MOST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF HIM COMES FROM THESE PRIMITIVE HOLOGRAPHIC DRAMAS OF THE LATE 22 ND CENTURY; EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS AGO!

-SIGH-

HE WAS SO DASHING! SO ROMANTIC!

I REMEMBER THE *FIRST TIME* I READ ABOUT HIM! HE SEEMED LIKE EVERYTHING I EVER WANTED TO BE.

ME, TOO...

"AND SO THEY BECAME LIKE SUPERBOY: EACH OF THEM HAD STRANGE POWERS, SUCH AS HAD BEEN UNKNOWN ON EARTH FOR MANY YEARS. THEY DECIDED TO USE THEM FOR THE GOOD OF ALL LIVING THINGS.

"IN MEMORY OF SUPERBOY THEY CREATED THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES."

IN MEMORY OF A BEING WHO NEVER REALLY *EXISTED!*

HE EXISTED *HERE*, SUPERMAN, AND HE WAS MY *FRIEND.*

AND MY *HERO!*

BUT SUPERMAN IS *RIGHT*, PETE. HARD AS IT MAY BE FOR US TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT, THERE *WAS NO SUPERBOY* UNTIL THE TIME TRAPPER DECIDED TO *CREATE* ONE.

"AND HE DID *THAT* BY REACHING BACK *ONE MILLION* YEARS INTO THE PAST...

"... AND REMOVING A SLICE OF THE COSMOS, A FRACTION OF TIME SO SMALL IT COULD NOT BE MEASURED...

"... YET CONTAINED WITHIN IT ALL THE STARS AND PLANETS OF A *WHOLE UNIVERSE!*

"HE *PRUNED* THAT 'CUTTING,' REMOVING FROM IT ALL THE WORLDS THAT WERE OF NO INTEREST TO HIM.

"CASUALLY ANNIHILATING *UNCOUNTED BILLIONS* OF LIFE-FORMS IN THE PROCESS...

"... UNTIL THERE WERE ONLY *TWO* LEFT...

"... THE PLANET KRYPTON...

"... AND THE PLANET EARTH."

"THESE TWO WORLDS HE CRAFTED, SHAPING THEM TO HIS WILL, TO CREATE THE KINDS OF PLANETS THAT WOULD BRING FORTH A SUPERBOY TO MATCH THE 30TH CENTURY LEGENDS.

"ON KRYPTON HE CREATED A CULTURE BASED ON SUPER-SCIENCE, FAR BEYOND OUR OWN...

"WHILE ON EARTH HE CRAFTED A TERRIBLE PAGEANT OF WAR AND DEATH, DISEASE AND SUFFERING.

UNFORTUNATELY, LEX, HE DID NOT HAVE TO *INVENT* THAT HISTORY. HE SIMPLY *DUPLICATED* THE ACTUAL HISTORY OF MY EARTH.

FOR THE MOST PART. BUT HE MADE SOME *SUBTLE* CHANGES, IF EVERYTHING YOU'VE *TOLD* ME ABOUT YOUR WORLD IS *TRUE*.

"FOR EXAMPLE, SUPERMAN, YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY SUPER-HERO YOUR WORLD HAS EVER PRODUCED.

"WE HAD ONLY SUPERBOY, BUT YOU HAVE MANY, MANY MORE."

YES. THE TRAPPER MUST'VE USED HIS ABILITY TO MOVE FREELY THROUGH TIME AND SPACE TO *ELIMINATE* THEM.

QUITE SO. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY ENOUGH TO *PREVENT* THE VARIOUS EVENTS THAT CAUSED THOSE MEN AND WOMEN TO BECOME SUPER-HEROES...

...AND SUPER-VILLAINS.

YES. THAT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT THING TO COME TO TERMS WITH, LEX.

YOUR COUNTERPART ON MY WORLD IS ONE OF THE MOST EVIL MEN ALIVE. HE HIDES IT, COVERS IT WITH GOOD WORKS DONE BY THE MASSIVE CORPORATION HE OWNS...

...BUT HE WOULD APPEAR TO BE A VERY DIFFERENT MAN THAN ME.

FASCINATING.

I WONDER WHAT COULD HAVE CAUSED THE DIFFERENCE?

YOU SEEM VERY MUCH AS WE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED SUPERBOY TO BE IF HE'D LIVED, SUPERMAN. AND YOUR LANA LANG...

...IS A LOT LIKE YOU, SUPERGIRL.

PROBABLY WE WILL NEVER KNOW, MY FRIENDS. SINCE I DID NOT COME TO SMALLVILLE UNTIL AFTER THE DEATH OF SUPERBOY, PERHAPS THE TIME TRAPPER WAS SIMPLY UNAWARE OF ME.

IN ANY EVENT, HE CLEARLY LOST INTEREST IN THIS WORLD AFTER THE DEATH OF SUPERBOY.

FOR SEVERAL YEARS WE WERE LEFT IN PEACE TO CONTINUE WITH OUR LIVES, UNAWARE OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED...

IN THE END IT WAS THAT NOT KNOWING THAT COST US TWO OF OUR DEAREST FRIENDS...

"MARTHA KENT PASSED ON, NOT LONG AFTER SUPERBOY VANISHED. JONATHAN FOLLOWED HER IN LESS THAN A WEEK.

"I'D GUESS IT WAS A BROKEN HEART THAT KILLED THEM BOTH. WE'D ALL LOST A FRIEND, A CHAMPION.

WILLIAMS CEMETERY

MARTHA KENT

"BUT THEY'D LOST A SON.

IT'S ALL SO UNFAIR, PETE! SO UNFAIR!

FOR THEM TO HAVE DIED WITHOUT EVER KNOWING WHAT HAPPENED TO CLARK. FOR ME TO LEARN CLARK'S GREATEST SECRET ONLY NOW, WHEN IT LOOKS AS IF WE'LL NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN...

TAKE IT EASY, LANA. IF THERE'S A WAY FOR SUPERBOY TO COME BACK TO US, I'M SURE HE WILL. I'M SURE HE WILL...

EXCUSE ME...

YES...?

YOU'RE PETE ROSS, AREN'T YOU? I WAS TOLD IN TOWN I SHOULD LOOK FOR YOU. THEY SAID YOU WERE SUPERBOY'S CLOSEST FRIEND.

MY NAME IS LEX LUTHOR.

YES, I'M PETE ROSS. AND THIS IS LANA LANG.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU, MR. LUTHOR?

I... DON'T KNOW, REALLY.

I ONLY JUST ARRIVED IN SMALLVILLE A FEW HOURS AGO. I CAME HERE BECAUSE I'D HOPED TO MEET SUPERBOY.

HE'S MY GREATEST HERO.

WHEN I GOT HERE AND STARTED ASKING AROUND I WAS TOLD TO COME UP HERE.

THEY SAID HIS FATHER WAS BEING BURIED HERE TODAY...?

HIS FOSTER-FATHER, YES.

JONATHAN KENT. SUPERBOY WAS REALLY CLARK KENT, YOU SEE. NOW THAT MA AND PA KENT ARE BOTH GONE, THERE'S NO REASON TO KEEP IT A SECRET ANY LONGER.

YES...

I'D HEARD IT RUMORED THAT SUPERBOY HAD A SECRET IDENTITY. I'D HOPED THAT BY COMING TO SMALLVILLE I MIGHT BE ABLE TO UNCOVER IT AND OFFER MY SERVICES TO HIM.

YOU SEE, I THINK I MAY HAVE DISCOVERED A CURE FOR KRYPTONITE POISONING.

OH, THAT'S WONDERFUL...! SUPERBOY WILL BE...

I MEAN...

EASY, LANA, EASY. WE ALL KEEP MAKING THAT SLIP...

ARE YOU SOME KIND OF SCIENTIST, MR. LUTHOR?

SMALLVILLE CEMETERY

PLEASE, CALL ME LEX.

AND, YES, I AM A SCIENTIST. THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT I COULD BE OF HELP TO SUPERBOY.

LEX... D'YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE YOUR SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE TO FIND SUPERBOY?

GEE, COULD THAT BE POSSIBLE?

I KNOW HE WENT OFF INTO THE THIRTIETH CENTURY WITH THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES...

HMM...

I DON'T KNOW...

I HAVE THEORIZED THAT ONE-WAY COMMUNICATION WITH THE FUTURE MIGHT BE POSSIBLE BY BOUNCING A RADIO BEAM OFF A DISTANT PLANET, SO THAT IT WOULD RETURN TO THE EARTH HUNDREDS OR EVEN THOUSANDS OF YEARS IN THE FUTURE.

I WON'T GUARANTEE ANYTHING, BUT IT'S SURE WORTH A TRY!!

"THAT WAS WHERE IT BEGAN. A SIMPLE ENOUGH DESIRE TO LEARN WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO OUR CHAMPION.

"NO WAY TO GUESS IT WOULD END IN ULTIMATE CATASTROPHE."

SO THIS IS SUPERBOY'S LAB!

WHAT A TRAGEDY THAT HIS BRILLIANT MIND WAS LOST!

IN THIS SMALL ROOM ARE DEVICES FAR BEYOND ANYTHING WE HAVE ON EARTH TODAY.

YOU CAN TELL THAT JUST BY LOOKING, LEX?

IF YOU'LL FORGIVE WHAT MAY SEEM IMMODEST...

...IT'S EASY ENOUGH FOR ME TO TELL HOW ADVANCED SOME OF THESE DEVICES ARE, SIMPLY BY THE FACT THAT I DO NOT IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZE THEIR PURPOSE.

YOU DON'T SUPPOSE SUPERBOY MIGHT HAVE BEEN JUST, YOU KNOW, TINKERING WITH SOME OF THIS STUFF?

THAT IT MIGHT NOT HAVE ANY REAL PURPOSE?

THAT SEEMS... UNLIKELY, LANA.

THE EVIDENCE IS THAT SUPERBOY WAS AT LEAST AS BRILLIANT AS I'D ALWAYS HOPED. I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'D WASTE HIS TIME WITH INCONSEQUENTIAL WORK.

PETE, YOU SAY YOU KNEW HIS SECRET IDENTITY FOR MANY YEARS.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THIS LAB?

NOT MUCH, LEX.

I ONLY CAME DOWN HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME MYSELF A FEW DAYS AGO. MR. KENT ASKED ME TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING WAS SECURE.

THEN YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHERE SUPERBOY MIGHT HAVE KEPT HIS MORE DANGEROUS DEVICES...?

DO YOU REALLY THINK HE'D KEEP DANGEROUS GADGETS RIGHT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF...

OH!

CLIK!

OH, MY...!

WOW!

YES...!

YES! YES!

THIS IS WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR! THIS IS WHERE SUPERBOY KEPT HIS GREATEST SECRETS!

WOW!

I NEVER HAD THE SLIGHTEST IDEA THIS PLACE WAS HERE! IT MUST BE UNDER THE KENTS' FRONT LAWN!

OF COURSE. SUPERBOY WOULD NOT WANT TO RISK ANYONE NOTICING A DISCREPANCY IN THE PROPORTIONS OF THE BASEMENT SHOULD THEY MANAGE TO DISCOVER HIS OTHER LAB, OUT HERE.

I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT MIGHT BE IN HERE, PETE? LANA?

N-NO...

IT MUST BE SOMETHING REALLY DANGEROUS, IF SUPERBOY THOUGHT HE HAD TO KEEP IT LOCKED UP EVEN IN HERE!

DANGEROUS... YES, PROBABLY VERY DANGEROUS.

I THINK IT WOULD BE BEST FOR THE TWO OF YOU TO LEAVE NOW.

I'M GOING TO SEE WHAT I CAN DO ABOUT OPENING THIS CABINET!

UNFORTUNATE THAT YOU COULD NOT SEE AHEAD, LEX, TO KNOW WHAT A TERRIBLE *PANDORA'S BOX* IT WAS YOU WERE SETTING ABOUT TO OPEN...

YES. BUT THERE WAS NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN...

EVEN THOUGH ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS I DISCOVERED WAS SUPERBOY'S *TIME-VIEWER SCOPE.*

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A DEVICE FOR SCANNING TIMELINES, PAST AND FUTURE.

YET THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO *BE* ANY FUTURE. IT IS AS IF EACH DAY WE LIVE CREATES THE *PAST*, BUT *NOTHING* YET EXISTS *AHEAD* OF US.

WHAT IN THE...??

GREETINGS, EARTHLING!

I AM *RELIEVED* I WAS ABLE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH YOU IN THIS FASHION! IT WAS A *DESPERATE* GAMBLE!

WHO...WHO ARE YOU?

FROM WHAT I CAN SEE OF YOUR NATIVE DRESS YOU WOULD SEEM TO BE A *KRYPTONIAN!* BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

NOT AT ALL, MY YOUNG FRIEND.

I AM... *VON-EL*, AND I SPEAK TO YOU NOW FROM... THE *SURVIVAL ZONE!*

VON-EL?

BUT SUPERBOY'S KRYPTONIAN NAME WAS... *KAL-EL!*

YES. SUPERBOY'S FATHER, *JOR-EL*, WAS MY *BROTHER!*

AND WHEN HE TOLD ME OF THE COMING DESTRUCTION OF KRYPTON I USED MY SCIENTIFIC SKILL TO CREATE THIS *SURVIVAL* AREA FOR MYSELF AND MY FAMILY!

FAMILY...??

THERE ARE *OTHER* KRYTONIANS THERE WITH YOU?

YES! THIS IS MY *WIFE, MARA*, AND HER BROTHER, *STON-AR.*

WE HAVE BEEN *TRAPPED* HERE AS DISEMBODIED *PHANTOMS* SINCE OUR HOMEWORLD WAS *DESTROYED!*

SUPERBOY HAS BEEN TRYING FOR MANY YEARS TO FIND A WAY TO *FREE* US, BUT ALL HIS BEST EFFORTS LED TO *FAILURE.*

HIS MOST NEAR SUCCESS WAS THE DEVICE YOU WILL FIND IN THE LOCKED CABINET TO YOUR RIGHT...

PERHAPS, WITH YOUR ADDITIONAL *BRILLIANCE* APPLIED TO THE PROBLEM, WE MAY YET FIND *FREEDOM!*

YES! *YES!*

FREED FROM YOUR PHANTOM STATE YOU WOULD BECOME AS *POWERFUL* AS SUPERBOY HIMSELF! YOU COULD TAKE HIS PLACE AS EARTH'S *CHAMPIONS!*

OF COURSE. THAT IS JUST WHAT WE *WISH* TO DO!

UNFORTUNATELY, I CANNOT DETERMINE ANY WAY TO OPEN THIS CABINET WITHOUT TRIGGERING THE *EXPLOSIVE DEVICES* SUPERBOY RIGGED INSIDE.

AND THAT WOULD *DESTROY* YOUR ONLY CHANCE OF ESCAPE.

BUT THAT IS *EASILY* OVERCOME, MY YOUNG FRIEND!

AS PHANTOMS WE ARE UNABLE TO *TOUCH* THE LOCK OURSELVES, BUT WE HAVE SEEN *SUPERBOY* DOING IT *MANY TIMES!*

WE WILL *TELL* YOU HOW TO OPEN THE CABINET!

"AND SO THEY DID.

"PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE *SUSPICIOUS*, BUT I WAS SO *OVERJOYED* THAT THERE WOULD SOON BE NEW *SUPER-HEROES* IN THE WORLD THAT I NEVER DOUBTED HER *VERACITY...*"

CAREFUL NOW, CAREFUL!

WITHOUT THAT DEVICE WE WILL BE TRAPPED IN THE *PHANTOM ZONE* FOREVER!

"PHANTOM ZONE...!"?

I THOUGHT YOU SAID IT WAS CALLED THE "SURVIVAL ZONE"?

ER...YES. SO I DID. IT IS ER, MY WIFE WHO OCCASIONALLY CALLS IT THE "PHANTOM ZONE."

NOW, QUICKLY! MAKE THE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE SETTINGS, AS WE INSTRUCTED YOU.

DONE!

NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS PRESS THIS BUTTON...

YES!

WE ARE FREE!!
SMASH!
UGH!
WHAT ABOUT THIS PUNY EARTHLING, GENERAL? SHALL I KILL HIM NOW?
NO... GENERAL, YOU PROMISED THE FIRST DEATH TO ME!
NEITHER OF YOU WILL KILL THIS ONE.
HE HAS SERVED US, AND NEVER LET IT BE SAID THAT GENERAL ZOD DOES NOT REWARD THOSE WHO SERVE HIM!
AND YOUR REWARD, MY INSIGNIFICANT FRIEND, WILL BE THE SPARING OF YOUR MISERABLE LITTLE LIFE...
...THOUGH I SUSPECT A TIME WILL COME WHEN YOU WILL NOT APPRECIATE THIS GIFT!
KRANG!
ARR!
YOU WASTE TIME WITH THIS POSTURING, GENERAL.
OUR ESCAPE PLAN HAS WORKED PERFECTLY...
YES! WE ARE FREE OF THE PHANTOM ZONE, WHILE OUR FELLOW KRYPTONIAN CRIMINALS REMAIN TRAPPED THERE!
THE TIME IS RIPE FOR CONQUEST!
ALLOW ME A MOMENT TO SAVOR MY VICTORY, MY FRIENDS.
I HAVE WAITED FOR A MOMENT WHEN WE COULD INITIATE THIS PLAN FROM THE MOMENT I ACCIDENTALLY DISCOVERED THE TIME-VIEWER COULD SOMETIMES TAP INTO THE PHANTOM ZONE.
WE NEEDED ONLY TO WAIT FOR THE PROPER DUPE TO COME ALONG, TO USE THE VIEWER AND ALLOW US TO TWIST THEM WITH OUR LIES.
NOW ALL THE WORLD IS OURS, MY FRIEND...
AND THIS PLANET WILL QUAKE AT THE NAMES OF GENERAL ZOD, QUEX-UI AND ZAORA AS ONCE OUR NATIVE KRYPTON DID!
NOW...
TO ENSURE NO FURTHER WORKS ARE DONE IN THIS PLACE...
DESTROY THE LAB!
WITH PLEASURE!
CRIMINALS!
I NEVER DREAMED A CULTURE AS ADVANCED AS KRYPTON WOULD STILL HAVE A CRIMINAL ELEMENT!
THIS SO-CALLED PHANTOM ZONE MUST BE THEIR EQUIVALENT OF A PRISON!
AND IT LOOKS AS IF MY GULLIBILITY HAS RELEASED THE WORST OF THE INMATES!!
GOOD! GOOD!
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, MY FRIENDS!
AND NOW THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO DEPART!
AND SO THEY FLEW OFF, TO MAKE GOOD THEIR PROUD BOAST...
TO SUBJUGATE THE WORLD...
AND ALL BECAUSE OF ME!
EASY, LEX, EASY.
YOU HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING...

I'VE TRIED TO TELL MYSELF THAT A THOUSAND TIMES IN THE LAST TEN YEARS, SUPERMAN.

TRIED TO CONVINCE MYSELF...

"...THAT I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CARNAGE THAT FOLLOWED.

"ZOD DECLARED HIMSELF KING OF THE WORLD, WITH ZAORA AS HIS QUEEN AND QUEX-UI AS HIS WHOLE ARMY.

"OF COURSE, THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD RESISTED.

SOMEHOW, THEY WERE EVEN ABLE TO TRACK DOWN AND DESTROY ALL KNOWN KRYPTONITE ON EARTH--THEY WERE NOW COMPLETELY UNSTOPPABLE!

"FOR THREE LONG YEARS THE BATTLE RAGED, ALL THE BICKERING NATIONS UNITED IN ONE GLORIOUS FRONT AGAINST A FOE OF IMPOSSIBLE POWER.

"BUT SUPERBOY HAD USED HIS POWERS ALWAYS IN DEFENSE OF MANKIND.

"WE HAD NEVER BEGUN TO DREAM WHAT WOULD BECOME OF THE WORLD IF SUCH POWER WAS TURNED AGAINST US.

"I WAS, OF COURSE, RECRUITED TO BUILD AND DESIGN WEAPONS FOR THE RESISTANCE.

"I CHOSE SMALLVILLE AS MY HOME BASE AND BUILT THIS TOWER.

"IT BECAME A RALLYING POINT FOR ALL THE MEN OF EARTH WHO STILL CRAVED FREEDOM."

WELCOME, GENTLEMEN, I'M GLAD TO HAVE YOU JOIN US.

WELCOME ANY OPPORTUNITY HELP, LUTHOR. I'VE EXHAUSTED INHERITANCE FUNDING SCHEMES TO BATTLE THESE MONSTERS...

AND I'D GIVE MY RIGHT ARM FOR A CRACK AT SOME OF THOSE FIGHTER PLANES WE SAW ON THE WAY IN.

I'M FLAT BROKE, TOO, FOR PRETTY MUCH THE SAME REASON AS BRUCE.

I'D SURE APPRECIATE A CHANCE TO KICK SOME KRYPTONIAN BUTT!

AND YOU'LL GET IT, MR. QUEEN, IF WE HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT.

I'M ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO MEET YOU, MR. JORDAN. YOUR EXPLOITS AS A TEST PILOT ARE INSPIRING!

AND YOU, MR. WAYNE...

I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE SOME TALENTS AS AN INVENTOR YOURSELF...

"TWO YEARS AGO I FOUND A WAY TO GIVE LANA SUPER-POWERS. SHE ADOPTED A VARIATION ON SUPERBOY'S COSTUME AS A RALLYING SYMBOL TO THE PEOPLE OF EARTH.*

"BUT EVEN THAT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO TURN THE TIDE IN OUR FAVOR. IT WAS BEGINNING TO LOOK AS IF NOTHING WOULD BE.

*AS DETAILED IN PART IN SUPERMAN #21

"UNTIL ONE DAY..."

REPORT FROM SUPERGIRL, LEX. SHE...

LEX! IT'S SUPERBOY! YOU'VE FOUND HIM!!

NO, PETE. THIS IS NOT SUPERBOY. THIS IS *SUPERMAN!*

SUPERMAN?!

THE SAME SUPERMAN I *MET* ALL THOSE YEARS AGO? THE ONE WHO APPEARED BRIEFLY IN SMALLVILLE RIGHT BEFORE SUPERBOY *DISAPPEARED?*

I BELIEVE SO.

I HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO MAKE *CONTACT* WITH HIM.

CONTACT?

YOU MEAN... YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET HIM TO *HELP* US?

"I THINK SO, PETE. I BELIEVE IT MAY BE OUR ONLY HOPE...!"

THIS IS *RIDICULOUS!*

WE ARE THE MOST POWERFUL BEINGS THIS PUNY WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN, YET STILL THE REBEL FORCES HOLD TERRITORY THAT SHOULD HAVE FALLEN TO US *YEARS* AGO.

THEY ARE LIKE *INSECTS*, MY GENERAL. THERE ARE JUST *TOO MANY* OF THEM FOR US TO COMPLETELY DESTROY.

AND AS LONG AS THEY *LIVE*, THEY *FIGHT!*

SUCH DETERMINATION IN THE FACE OF IMPOSSIBLE ODDS IS ALMOST *ADMIRABLE!*

ADMIRABLE?!?

IT IS *PATHETIC!* AND WE WILL WASTE *NO MORE* OF OUR TIME AND ENERGY ON INDIVIDUAL BATTLES!

I HAVE CONCEIVED A PLAN BY WHICH WE CAN ELIMINATE *ALL* RESISTANCE...

"...BY ELIMINATING *ALL LIFE ON EARTH.!!*

"AND SO THEY SET OFF TO *INITIATE* THEIR MAD, TERRIBLE PLAN."

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!

IN TWELVE HOURS THIS WORLD WILL BE A LIFELESS HUSK!

"ONLY A MADMAN COULD HAVE CONCEIVED WHAT HAPPENED NEXT..."

"FROM THREE DIFFERENT POINTS UNDER THE OCEANS OF EARTH THE KRYPTONIANS USED THEIR INDESTRUCTIBLE BODIES TO BORE DOWN THROUGH THE CRUST TO THE MOLTEN CORE OF THE PLANET.

"MILLIONS OF GALLONS OF SEAWATER GUSHED DOWN BEHIND THEM AND AT THE MOMENT OF CONTACT WITH THE CORE...

"...WAS INSTANTLY TRANSFORMED INTO SUPER-HEATED STEAM, WHICH BLASTED BACK OUT, BOILING THE SEAS...

"...AND RIPPING AWAY THE SLENDER ENVELOPE OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE!!!"

WITH THE ATMOSPHERE GONE, THE BLISTERING RAYS OF THE ONCE LIFE-GIVING SUN DID THE REST, TURNING THE WHOLE PLANET INTO A SINGLE, DEAD SCAR!

WE SURVIVED ONLY BECAUSE OF THE PROTECTIVE FORCE FIELD LEX HAD CREATED AROUND SMALLVILLE TO PROTECT US FROM THE KRYPTONIANS' REPEATED ATTACKS.

IT SEEMED ALMOST *POINTLESS* AFTER THAT TO CONTINUE WITH LEX'S PLAN TO CONTACT YOU, BUT WE WERE NOT ABOUT TO ROLL OVER AND PLAY DEAD.

I HAD, BY THEN, DEDUCED MUCH OF THE *TRUE NATURE* OF OUR WORLD. I KNEW NOTHING OF THE TIME TRAPPER AND HIS SCHEMES AGAINST THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES, BUT I HAD GUESSED THAT OUR UNIVERSE WAS VERY MUCH LESS THAN IT SEEMED TO BE.

AND SO YOU CAME UP WITH A WAY TO SEND LANA OVER INTO *MY* WORLD...

"YES. IT WAS DANGEROUS. IT REQUIRED FLYING FIRST ACROSS THE BLASTED PLANET, FAR SOUTH TO ANTARCTICA, NOW BARE OF ITS ICY SHEATH.

"I HAD DEDUCED THAT THE POLES WOULD BE THE MOST STABLE AREAS FROM WHICH TO LAUNCH OUR MAD GAMBLE, AND SINCE THE KRYPTONIANS HELD THE NORTH...

THIS OPERATION WILL *BLANK* YOUR MEMORY, LANA.

THAT WAY, IF WE *FAIL* AND YOU ARE SOMEHOW *TAKEN* BY THE ENEMY, YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO *REVEAL* ANYTHING TO THEM.

BUT HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT TO DO IF I *DO* REACH SUPERMAN'S WORLD?

WITHOUT MY MEMORY, I'LL BE *USELESS* TO THE CAUSE...

DON'T WORRY. I'M IMPLANTING A *COMPULSION* TO GO TO THE SMALLVILLE OF THIS OTHER EARTH.

ONCE YOU ARE THERE, CERTAIN *TRIGGER IMAGES* WILL CAUSE YOUR MEMORY TO SLOWLY RETURN.

I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW WE CAN BE SURE THIS OTHER SUPERMAN WILL FIND ME IN TIME UNDER ALL THE *ICE*.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT *THAT*, EITHER.

I'M GOING TO SEND YOU *BACK IN TIME* AT THE SAME MOMENT YOU CROSS OVER. YOU'LL BE IN *SUSPENDED ANIMATION* UNDER THE ICE FOR AT LEAST *TWO HUNDRED YEARS*.

WITH HIS ABILITY TO TRAVEL THROUGH TIME THERE WILL BE *PLENTY* OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPERMAN TO FIND YOU.

UNFORTUNATELY, WHAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT SUPERBOY'S TIME TRAVELING ABILITY WAS ALL PART OF THE TRAPPER'S PLAN.

I *CAN'T* TRAVEL THROUGH TIME UNDER MY OWN POWER, AND SO SUPERGIRL LAY UNDISCOVERED FOR NEARLY *TWO CENTURIES!*

NEVERTHELESS, IT SEEMS THE *FATES* WERE ON OUR SIDE, SUPERMAN.

SHE *WAS* DISCOVERED, AND NOW YOU ARE *HERE!*

AND NOW IT'S TIME TO DO SOME OF THAT *SERIOUS* BUTT-KICKING I WAS TALKING ABOUT.

AMAZING!

THESE ARE THE *COUNTERPARTS* OF MEN WHO BECAME THREE OF THE *GREATEST* SUPER-HEROES OF MY WORLD. AND EVEN WITHOUT THEIR POWERS AND GADGETS, THEY'RE STILL *HEROES!*

YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, MR. QUEEN.

FIVE BILLION HUMANS, UNCOUNTED BILLIONS UPON BILLIONS OF LIFE-FORMS HAVE *PERISHED HORRIBLY* BECAUSE OF THESE SO-CALLED KRYPTONIANS.

IT'S TIME *ZOD* AND HIS MURDERING CREW WERE MADE TO *PAY IN FULL* FOR THEIR ACTIONS!

NEXT IN SUPERMAN # 22

HOW DOES SUPERMAN DEAL WITH THE KRYPTONIAN MASS MURDERERS? THE ANSWER WILL ASTOUND YOU! DON'T MISS PART THREE OF THE SUPERGIRL SAGA...

"THE PRICE" NEXT MONTH!

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SUPERMAN®

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THE PRICE

I LOOK DOWN ON THE SHATTERED LANDSCAPE BELOW ME AND TRY TO IMAGINE HOW IT MUST HAVE BEEN BEFORE THIS WAR BEGAN.

HOW MUCH IT MUST HAVE LOOKED LIKE MY OWN KANSAS, MY OWN SMALLVILLE, WHEN THE FIELDS WERE LUSH WITH GRAIN AND THE SKIES WERE FULL OF BIRDS.

WHEN CHILDREN PLAYED IN THE STREETS, AND OLD FOLKS SAT ON THEIR VERANDAS, SMILING AT THEIR MEMORIES AND THE PROMISES OF ALL THAT LAY AHEAD.

PROMISES THAT WILL FOREVER REMAIN UNFULFILLED.

MY VISION POWERS REVEAL NO SIGNS OF LIFE IN SMALLVILLE.

AND IF THERE IS NO LIFE HERE...

THEN EXCEPT FOR FOUR OTHERS AND MYSELF THERE IS NO LIFE ANYWHERE IN THIS UNIVERSE.

AND OF WE FIVE, THREE ARE VILLAINS, INHUMAN MONSTERS SUCH AS I HAD NEVER DREAMED EXISTED...

COME ON, SUPERMAN! THERE GOES QUEX-UL!

RIGHT WITH YOU, SUPERGIRL!

CIRCLE LEFT, SUPERGIRL. WE'LL COME AT HIM WITH A PINCER EFFECT!

GOT IT!

WHAT'S THIS? ANOTHER EARTHLING FOOL HAS ADOPTED THE COSTUME OF SUPERBOY!

DO NOT WASTE YOUR PUNY POWERS ON ME, HUMAN. LIKE SUPERGIRL, YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR A TRUE KRYPTONIAN!

WELL, YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG ON A COUPLE POINTS THERE, QUEX-UL.

NUMBER ONE, I'M NOT A NATIVE EARTHLING...

NUMBER TWO, THIS IS MY COSTUME, NOT SUPERBOY'S...

4

AND AS FOR POWER...

GREAT KRYPTON!

THIS NEWCOMER MAY BE AS POWERFUL AS WE ARE, ZAORA!

HIS SINGLE BLOW HAS HURLED QUEX-UL BEYOND THE HORIZON!

IT WOULD SEEM THERE IS MORE TO HIM THAN THE SO CALLED "SUPERGIRL."

HER POWERS ARE NOTHING LIKE... ER, GENERAL...

AH, YES.

THIS ONE IS MINE, I BELIEVE, MY DEAR...

BRUCE WAYNE TO CENTRAL!

ZOD'S GOT ME IN HIS HEAT VISION.

I GHAHHHHH!!!

5

BRUCE!!

NO ONE COULD HAVE COME OUT OF THAT CRASH ALIVE!

HE'S DEAD!

DEAD!!

EASY, LANA!

DON'T GIVE UP!

LEX!

KEEP FIGHTING, SUPERGIRL!

WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T GIVE UP!

SMALLVILLE STATION TO LUTHOR!

COME IN, LEX!

LUTHOR HERE. REPORT, SMALLVILLE.

WE'RE IN TROUBLE, LEX! QUEX-UL IS HERE! HE'S HITTING OUR SCREENS WITH EVERYTHING HE'S GOT!

DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER WE CAN...

SQUAWK!

SMALLVILLE? PETE?

PETE!!

THEY'RE...

GONE!

NO, LEX!

NO!

PETE.. ALL THE OTHERS...

IF SMALLVILLE STATION IS GONE... THEY'RE DEAD!

WE'RE THE ONLY ONES LEFT!

HA HA HA HA HA!

DID YOU HEAR THAT, GENERAL?

INDEED I DID, MY DEAR. THESE COMMUNICATION DEVICES WE CAPTURED FROM THE REBELS HAVE BEEN A REAL BOON!

NOT ONLY DO THEY ALLOW US TO SPEAK IN THIS VACUUM ENVIRONMENT...

THEY ALLOW US TO MONITOR THE REBELS' TRANSMISSIONS.

OH, YEAH?

WELL, MONITOR THIS, ZOD!

LANA, NO! NO!

DON'T TRY TO TAKE ON ZOD AND ZAORA ALONE...

WHY NOT, SUPERMAN?

DO YOU WISH TO SPARE HER...

THIS!!

LANA!

LET HER GO, SUPERMAN.

THE PROTOMATTER WILL REGENERATE ITSELF SOON ENOUGH.

PROTOMATTER? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, LEX?

"NO TIME TO EXPLAIN NOW, SUPERMAN.

"LOOK!

"ZOD AND ZAORA HAVE FINISHED HAL JORDAN AND OLIVER QUEEN."

YOU AND I ARE THE ONLY ONES LEFT NOW, SUPERMAN.

IT'S UP TO US TO STOP THESE KRYPTONIANS!

BUT... HOW, LEX? THEY'VE PROVEN THEIR SUPERIORITY TO YOUR BEST WEAPONRY..

AND, LIKE SUPERBOY WAS, THEY ARE STRONGER THAN ME.

THERE'S ONE POSSIBILITY.

SUPERMAN, I DON'T WANT TO RISK THEM HEARING OUR TRANSMISSION.

USE YOUR X-RAY VISION TO READ MY LIPS.

HERE'S WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO...

??

BUT, LEX, I CAN'T LEAVE YOU NOW! NOT ON SUCH A SLIM CHANCE...

YOU MUST, SUPERMAN.

YOU ARE OUR ONLY HOPE!

NOW, GO!

WHILE I TRY TO DISTRACT THEM!

WHILE LEX TRIES TO DISTRACT THEM...

I'M LEFT HERE, SEARCHING THE RUINS OF SMALLVILLE...

AND WITH VERY LITTLE TIME TO DO IT IN!

I'VE HAD TO ABANDON MY OXYGEN MASK-COMMUNICATOR SO THAT ZOD AND THE OTHERS WON'T BE ABLE TO TRACK ME TOO EASILY.

MY BEST ESTIMATE IS THAT MY SUPER-EFFICIENT LUNGS WILL BE ABLE TO FUNCTION ON THE SINGLE DEEP BREATH I TOOK FOR ABOUT NINETY MORE MINUTES.

PROVIDED NOTHING HAPPENS THAT CAUSES ME TO BURN OXYGEN FASTER THAN...

UNGH!

QUEX-UL!

I'D ASSUMED HE WOULD HAVE HEADED BACK TO THE BATTLE-FIELD.

THAT MISTAKE COULD COST US EVERYTHING!

HE'S COMPLETELY RUTHLESS. FASTER THAN I AM...

AND STRONGER.

I DON'T WANT TO TAKE WHAT SEEMS LIKE THE COWARD'S WAY OUT...

...BUT TOO MUCH IS DEPENDING ON ME TO RISK GETTING KILLED IN SOME STUPID MACHO BRAWL.

I 'VE GOT TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON LEX'S PLAN.

GOT TO FIND SUPERBOY'S LAB UNDER ALL THESE RUINS.

I WAS ONLY AT THE KENT HOUSE ONCE...

AND THAT WAS UNDER CONDITIONS THAT WERE FAR FROM THE BEST.

BUT, EVEN WITH ALL OF SMALLVILLE REDUCED TO RUBBLE...

I THINK THE HOUSE SHOULD BE RIGHT ABOUT HERE!

...AND THIS IS ALL THAT REMAINS OF SUPERBOY'S SECRET LABORATORY.

IT WAS DESTROYED BY THE PHANTOM ZONE CRIMINALS.

THERE'S STILL SOME AIR TRAPPED DOWN HERE. I CAN BREATHE AGAIN.

AMAZING! I'M A PRETTY FAIR HAND MYSELF WITH GADGETS...

...BUT I COULD NEVER HAVE PUT TOGETHER ANYTHING LIKE...

FOOL!

YOU WASTE TIME GAPING... AND FOR THAT YOU DIE!

QUEX-UL!!

YOU SERVE ME IN GOOD STEAD, SUPERMAN.

FOR YEARS I HAVE DREAMED OF LITTLE ELSE BUT GRINDING SUPERBOY'S BONES TO PASTE!

UNGH!

IF I CANNOT HAVE HIM, YOU WILL MAKE AN ACCEPTABLE SURROGATE!

HE'S NOT EXAGGERATING!

WHEN THE TIME TRAPPER CREATED THIS UNIVERSE HE MADE THESE KRYPTONIANS VERY DIFFERENT FROM ME.

THE WAY THEY PROCESS SOLAR ENERGY IS MUCH MORE EFFICIENT THAN THE WAY MY BODY DOES.

QUEX-UL IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO KILL ME.

12

BUT LUCKILY, MY X-RAY VISION REVEALS I DO HAVE AN ACE IN THE HOLE.

QUITE LITERALLY!

END OF THE LINE, QUEX-UL.

YOUR MURDERING RAMPAGE ENDS HERE!

WHAT...??

GOLD KRYPTONITE!!

NO!!

YES...THE ONE FORM OF KRYPTONITE THAT CAN PERMANENTLY REMOVE A KRYPTONIAN'S SUPER-POWERS...

AT LEAST, THOSE FROM THIS UNIVERSE.

BUT HOW? HOW?

WE HUNTED DOWN AND DESTROYED ALL THE KRYPTONITE ON THIS PLANET!

NO KRYPTONITE HAS FALLEN SINCE THEN...

GOLD K

13

I DON'T THINK YOU'VE DONE *ANYTHING* TO *DESERVE* AN EXPLANATION, QUEX-UL.

NOW... AT *SUPER-SPEED* I CAN CONVERT THE STEEL WALLS OF SUPERBOY'S LAB INTO A SUITABLE *CELL BLOCK*...

...AND WITH QUEX-UL IMPRISONED INSIDE I CAN TAKE CARE OF ZOD AND ZAORA.

GENERAL, LOOK! SUPERMAN IS RETURNING!

YES... AND MY X-RAY VISION REVEALS HE HAS CAPTURED QUEX-UL.

QUICKLY, WE MUST *FREE* HIM, AND PUT AN END TO THAT...

O-OHH...

ZOD, I FEEL...

SUDDEN...

WEAKNESS...

SUPER-POWERS... FAILING...

IN YOU GO!

THE GOLD K I TUCKED INTO MY CAPE POUCH HAS KNOCKED OUT YOUR POWERS JUST AS I DID QUEX-UL'S.

NOW YOU CAN PASS THROUGH THE *AIR-LOCK* AND JOIN HIM...

NOW... WHILE THOSE THREE *MONSTERS* LANGUISH IN MY JURY-RIGGED PRISON...

...I'VE GOT TO FIND...

...LEX!

HE'S ALIVE... *BARELY.*

GOT TO USE HIS SPARE EMERGENCY OXYGEN MASK...

LEX! CAN YOU HEAR ME?

SUPERMAN..

SORRY... ABOUT *DECEPTION*... WITH SUPERGIRL. LANA WAS ONE... OF THE FIRST KILLED.

I USED HER... *MOLECULAR MATRIX*... TO CREATE... PATTERN FOR PROTOMATTER..

ARTIFICIAL LIFE FORM... MY CREATION... HOPED...: KOFF: ...YOU'D COME IF IT WAS *LANA*...

SHE...NEVER KNEW SHE WASN'T *REAL*.

NEVER MIND THAT NOW, LEX.

WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS WHY YOU DIDN'T USE THE GOLD KRYPTONITE *BEFORE*, IF YOU KNEW IT WAS THERE.

ALL THIS COULD HAVE BEEN *PREVENTED* YEARS AGO.

CALL IT... *EGO*, SUPERMAN.

IT WAS MY FAULT ZOD AND THE OTHERS ESCAPED FROM THE PHANTOM ZONE. I... WANTED IT TO BE BY *MY HAND* THAT THEY WERE *DEFEATED*.

THIS WORLD... HAS PAID... A TERRIBLE PRICE... FOR MY *FOLLY*... SUPERMAN.

YOU MUST... MAKE SURE... IT NEVER... HAPPENS... AGAIN.

LEX!

HE'S... *GONE*.

HE WAS THE LAST LIVING HUMAN ON THIS WORLD.

NOW THAT HE IS GONE THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO KEEP ME HERE.

NOTHING...

...EXCEPT THE DISPOSITION OF THE THREE LAST SURVIVORS OF THE KRYPTON OF THIS UNIVERSE.

HA HA! YOU MAY HAVE ROBBED US OF OUR POWERS, SUPERMAN, BUT THAT WILL AVAIL YOU NOTHING!

WE WILL FIND A WAY TO GET THEM BACK! WE WILL FIND A WAY TO GET TO YOUR REALITY.

AND WE WILL DESTROY YOU AND YOUR WORLD!

YOU CANNOT STOP US.

YOU CANNOT EVEN RETURN US TO THE PHANTOM ZONE!

YOU'RE RIGHT, ZAORA. I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO REBUILD THE PHANTOM ZONE PROJECTOR QUEX-UL DESTROYED.

NEVERTHELESS, I AM FORCED TO FIND A WAY TO STOP THE THREE OF YOU ONCE AND FOR ALL!

YOU HAVE RUTHLESSLY MURDERED ALL THE PEOPLE ON THIS PLANET--FIVE BILLION HUMANS!

THAT IS A CRIME WITHOUT EQUAL! THE NAZI HOLOCAUST PALES BY COMPARISON.

AND WHAT CAN YOU DO, YOU WHO WEAR THE MANTLE OF SUPERBOY?

YOU SHARE HIS PATHETIC IDEALISM. YOU CHERISH LIFE, EVEN OURS.

AND THAT IS WHAT MAKES YOU WEAK!

I'M NOT WEAK, ZOD.

IT IS YOU WHO ARE WEAK. YOU THREE, WHO HAVE USED YOUR POWERS ONLY FOR EVIL. THAT IS THE EASY WAY.

AND WHILE YOU ARE POWERLESS NOW--

--YOU ARE STILL KRYPTONIANS!

WHAT I MUST NOW DO IS HARDER THAN ANYTHING I HAVE EVER DONE BEFORE.

BUT AS THE LAST REPRESENTATIVE OF LAW AND JUSTICE ON THIS WORLD, IT FALLS TO ME TO ACT AS JUDGE, JURY...

...AND EXECUTIONER.

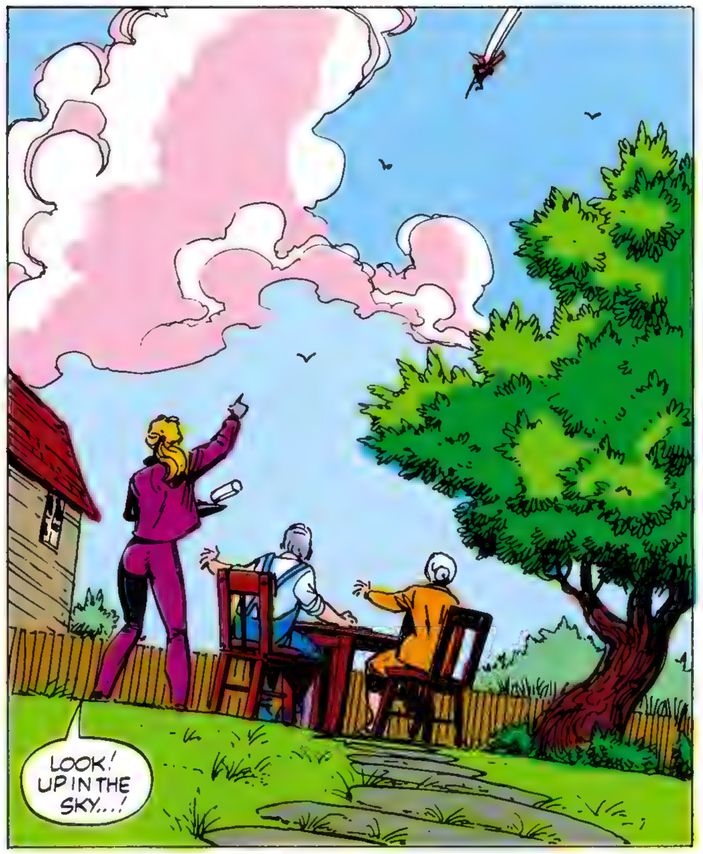
GREEN KRYPTONITE!

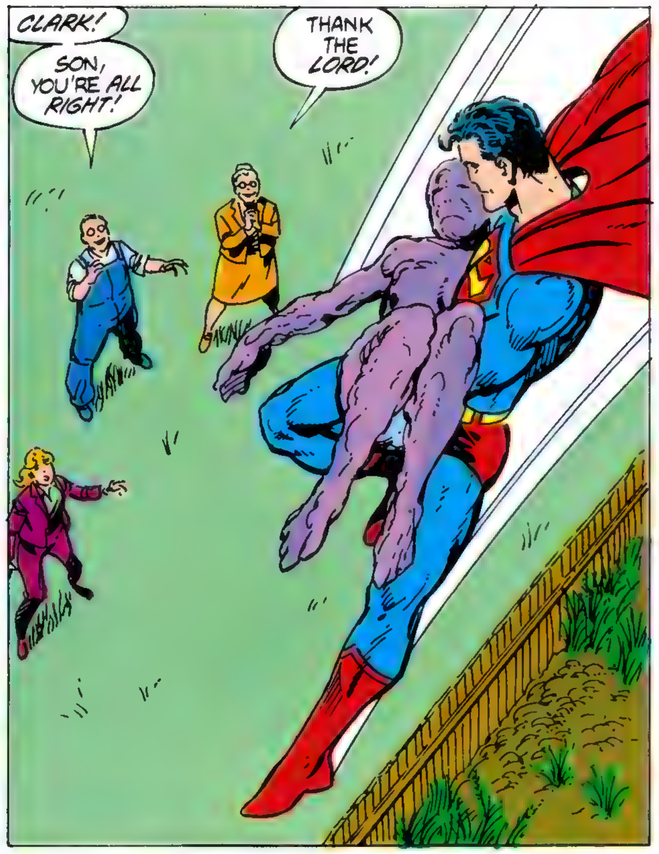
NO! NO!!

SUPERMAN...
DON'T *DO* THIS! PLEASE! IT WASN'T ME! I WAS AN *INNOCENT FOIL!*
A *DUPE* OF QUEX-UL AND ZAORA!
WHAT--?!?
WHY, YOU *LYING DOG!!*
QUEX--
UURK!
TREACHEROUS... TO THE...*LAST,* EH... ZOD?
THEN... IT SHALL NOT... BE BY *SUPERMAN'S HAND*.. THAT YOU *DIE*...
BUT...
...BY...
...MINE!
SUPERMAN...
...PLEASE...
...SPARE ME AND I WILL DO *ANY-THING!*
I WILL... BE YOUR... SLAVE...
I WILL... SHOW YOU... *PLEASURES*...
...SUCH AS... YOU NEVER...
...DREAMED...

WHAT...?

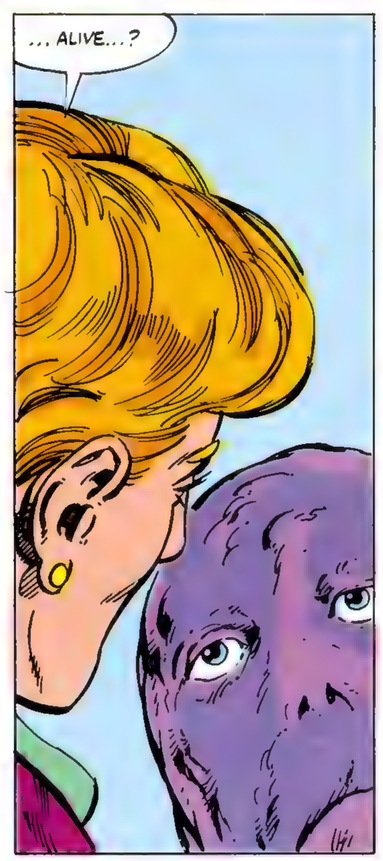
WHAT'S THAT...?

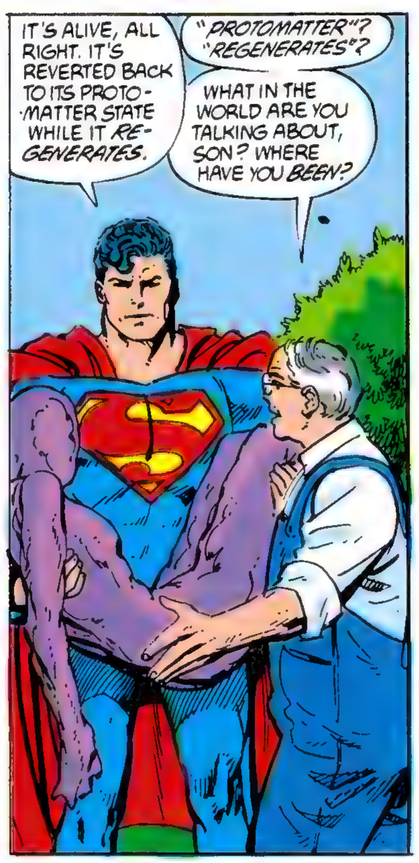

LOOK! UP IN THE SKY...!


CLARK!
SON, YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
THANK THE LORD!

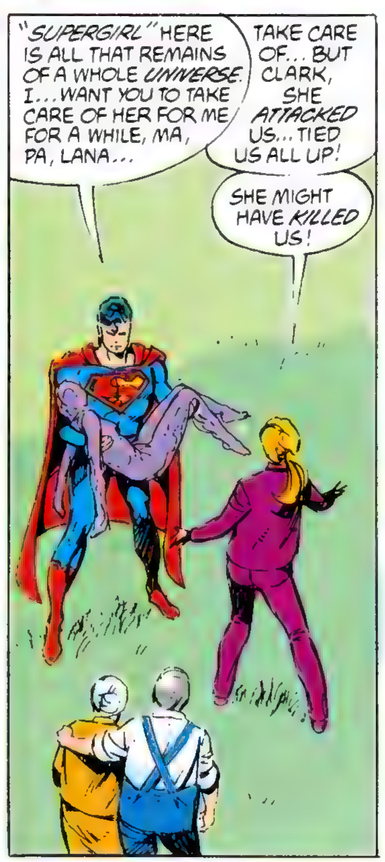
BUT WHO...
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS...IS...
THIS IS "SUPERGIRL," LANA.

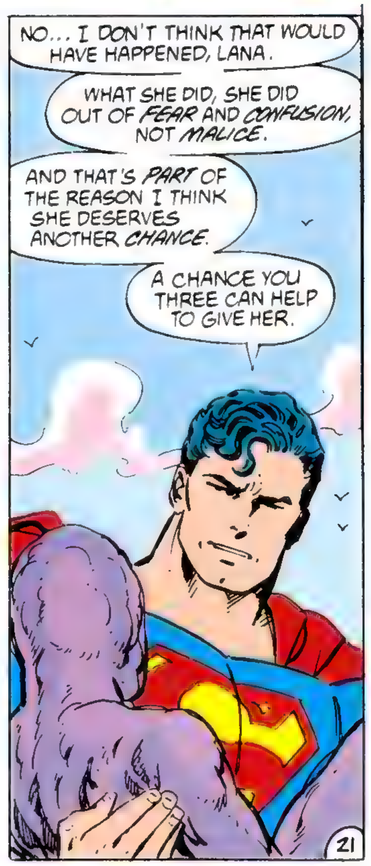
SUPERGIRL...??
YOU MEAN THE ONE WHO...WHO...?
BUT THIS THING CAN'T BE...


... ALIVE...?


IT'S ALIVE, ALL RIGHT. IT'S REVERTED BACK TO ITS PROTO-MATTER STATE WHILE IT RE-GENERATES.
"PROTOMATTER"? "REGENERATES"?
WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, SON? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

I'VE BEEN TO THE END OF THE WORLD, PA.
MAYBE THE END OF TWO WORLDS...


"SUPERGIRL" HERE IS ALL THAT REMAINS OF A WHOLE UNIVERSE. I...WANT YOU TO TAKE CARE OF HER FOR ME FOR A WHILE, MA, PA, LANA...
TAKE CARE OF... BUT CLARK, SHE ATTACKED US...TIED US ALL UP!
SHE MIGHT HAVE KILLED US!


NO... I DON'T THINK THAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED, LANA.
WHAT SHE DID, SHE DID OUT OF FEAR AND CONFUSION, NOT MALICE.
AND THAT'S PART OF THE REASON I THINK SHE DESERVES ANOTHER CHANCE.
A CHANCE YOU THREE CAN HELP TO GIVE HER.

?

YOU'RE... NOT *STAYING*, THEN, SON?

NO, PA... WELL, MAYBE... I DON'T KNOW...

I HAVE TO... BE *ALONE* FOR A WHILE. I NEED TO *THINK*.

SON... WHAT IS IT? YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T *HIDE* ANYTHING FROM ME.

SOMETHING'S *WRONG*. *REAL* WRONG. I CAN TELL.

YES... BUT IT'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO RESOLVE MYSELF, MA.

I'LL SPEND THE NIGHT... BUT LET ME GET AWAY FOR A *MOMENT*...

TAKE CARE OF "*SUPERGIRL*" FOR ME, NOW... OKAY?

IF YOU CAN IMPART TO HER *HALF* THE LOVE AND STRENGTH YOU GAVE ME, SHE'LL BE A *FINE HUMAN BEING* WHEN YOU'RE DONE.

IT'S STRANGE NOW TO FEEL THE WIND AGAINST MY FACE, AFTER THE HARD VACUUM OF THAT OTHER EARTH.

STRANGE TO THINK OF FIVE BILLION HUMANS GOING ABOUT THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES, OBLIVIOUS TO THE ANNIHILATION OF THEIR DOPPELGANGERS.

AND STRANGE, TOO, TO KNOW THAT IN THEIR EYES I AM STILL SUPERMAN, STILL THE UNTARNISHED CHAMPION OF HUMANITY.

WHEN I KNOW THAT FROM NOW ON THINGS CAN NEVER TRULY BE THE SAME AGAIN...

NEXT WEEK: *THE BEGINNING OF THE* **END (?)** *in* **THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN** #445-- *also featuring the RETURN OF* **BRAINIAC!**

Superman Post-Crisis Chronology
Volume 024 The Supergirl Saga

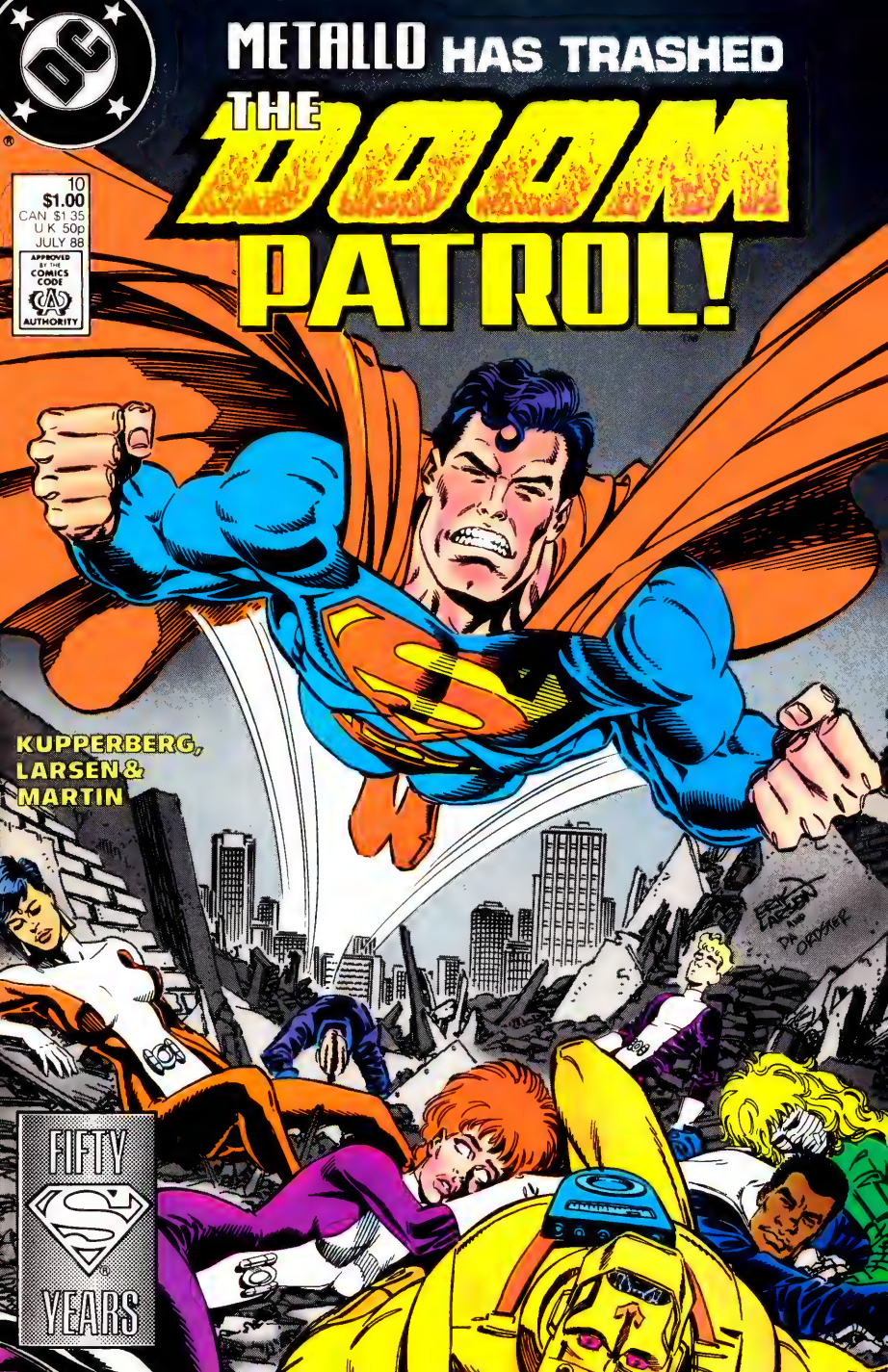
"The Soul of the Machine", first appeared in Doom Patrol issue #10, released May, 1988
Paul Kupperberg (writer), Erik Larsen (penciller), Erik Larsen (penciller), Erik Larsen (inker), Gary Martin (inker), Jerry Ordway (inker), Monika Livingston (inker)

"Doom in the Heartland!", first appeared in Superman issue #20, released June, 1988
(writer), John Byrne (penciller), Karl Kesel (inker)

"You Can't Go Home Again", first appeared in Superman issue #21, released July, 1988
John Byrne (writer), John Byrne (penciller), John Beatty (inker)

"Parallel Lives Meet At Infinity...", first appeared in The Adventures of Superman issue #444, released July, 1988
John Byrne (writer), (penciller), Dennis Janke (inker), Jerry Ordway (inker)

"The Price", first appeared in Superman issue #22, released July 20, 1988
John Byrne (writer), John Byrne (penciller), John Byrne (inker)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